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## MONTHLY MAGAZINE

JULY 1910

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*Author of "Germaine," "Sea-Scamps," etc.*

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# LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## THE LADY THALIA

BY

HENRY C. ROWLAND

*Author of "Grimes Takes Command," "Sea Scamps," etc.*

### PART I.

"THE men look poisonous, but the girl is rather pretty," said Stephen Dallas.

"'Poisonous' is scarcely the word," answered Sir James—"unless you apply it to the big Jew in the same sense that it might refer to the hind leg of a mule. The girl is Austrian, I fancy, with perhaps a dash of Italian. She would be rather a beauty—when you got used to her."

"She does not look to me as if you would ever get used to her."

"So much the better. That is worth far more than beauty."

The Englishman let his big frame sink back upon one elbow, stretched his long legs on the hot sand, and looked off to sea. Dallas lit a cigarette and glanced curiously toward the trio sitting on the beach at a few yards' distance.

"The stones on that big Jew's hands give me a *vertigo*," said he, "and his accent suggests a toucan with a cold. What beastly language are they talking?"

"I don't know. It seems to be all spits and sputters, with now and then a bark."

Sir James stopping spinning his monocle around his finger, to screw it into his eye and survey the trio. Under the fixity of his British stare, all three turned with the same impulse and looked at the two young men. Then with equal unity of action all three scowled: the girl with a sudden intensity that brought a swarthy flush to her

clear skin, the Jew with a diabolical raising of the outer ends of his black, bushy eyebrows; the third member of the party, a thick-set, sulky-looking young man, whose personality suggested an overfed black cat, muttered something which could not have been amiable.

"Better not stare at her, James," said Dallas. "If she were to run over here and bite you, you'd certainly go mad."

"I shall risk it," said Sir James, "to find out if she's pretty." He stared placidly for a moment, then blinked out the monocle and turned to his friend. "You are quite right, old chap; she is."

"I am beginning to change my mind," said Dallas. "I don't think that I like yellow eyes and blue hair. The color scheme should be reversed. Now she's angry and going off to sulk. She gets up like a cat or a puma—all part of the same swing. Gad, she's got a figure! Now, *don't* stare her off the beach until I've looked! My word, but you English have beastly manners!"

The girl had risen and was standing, beautifully poised, looking at the sea over the heads of her companions. She said a few words, then moved off toward the bath-houses.

"She's going to bathe," said Sir James. "Believe I'll have a dip myself. Coming in?"

"No thanks. Too late in the season. I have n't thawed out yet from yesterday's swim, and I've got to run the car this afternoon."

The Englishman rose to his feet and strode off toward the bath-houses. It was late in September, and the little resort was almost deserted. Dallas and his friend had dropped in *en tour* on the motor-car belonging to the former.

In a few moments Sir James came stalking down the beach, an attractive masculine combination of fresh, athletic skin, long clean muscles, and yellow hair, his very blue eyes like lapis lazuli against his brick-red complexion. The two friends were of markedly different type, as Dallas was of medium height, slender, wiry, of a high nervous tension, and with the face of a very handsome and thoroughbred woman. His eyes were a clear gray, with lashes very long and black. No one had ever seen him thrown out of poise.

Sir James stretched his naked limbs luxuriously upon the hot sand and looked with cheerful expectation toward the bath-houses.

"Why don't you loll out your tongue and prick up your ears and wag your tail, James?" snapped Dallas irritably. "Can't you decently cloak your emotions? And I must say you have plenty of cheek to calmly go in swimming with that girl."

"The Channel is free to all, and why is a woman made pretty if not to attract the eyes of men? Ah!"

Dallas looked around and saw the girl coming down the beach. She was enveloped in a white *peignoir* and followed by an exceedingly

pretty and smart-looking maid. Her blue-black hair was tied up in a yellow handkerchief, and her feet were bare and beautifully shaped. As she passed her two companions, the younger man followed her with his eyes. The Jew was writing or making some calculations in a note-book and did not look up. The girl threw a quick glance toward Sir James, which was observed by her friend, who scowled.

"Jealous brute, the cubby-faced beggar," drawled Sir James. "Did you see that look? How he'd like to slide a knife into me for presuming to tub in the same ocean with the beauty! Oh, I say, old chap, look at her! Is n't she 'stunning!'"

"She makes the sea look quite dingy," Dallas admitted.

The maid had taken her *peignoir*, and the girl was standing at the water's edge, her superb figure cut sharp and pure against the vivid background of the sea, ruffled by the strong land breeze to a deep-toned ultramarine which was flecked with wisps of snowy spray. Her arms and legs were bare, and the rich sunlight lent to the flesh tints something of its saffron tone. As if against her will, she glanced back over her shoulder at Sir James, then gave a little involuntary toss of her chin, which caused the two young men to look at each other with a smile.

"Then tuck yourself into the water if you hate so to be admired," muttered Dallas, and perhaps his thought reached the girl, for she waded rapidly down the steep beach and, plunging in, began to swim seaward. Sir James watched her and tugged thoughtfully at his wiry mustache.

"I wonder if she knows about the offshore current," he said.

"Don't worry. She's bound across for Ramsgate."

There were some women and children bathing, and a few people sitting here and there about the beach. Near by, a big fishing-boat was hauled up, and a man was caulking her seams. Dallas observed that he had stopped work and was watching the girl, who was swimming steadily seaward. Higher up on the beach were some other and larger boats, but the place was an open roadstead, with no inlet for miles, and there were no boats in the water.

"She is getting too far out," observed Sir James. "Believe I'll swim out and warn her. But you'd better tell her friends to call her back."

He rose lightly to his feet and waded down the beach. Dallas hailed the two men who had been with the girl.

"Beg pardon," said he, "but I think that you had better warn Madame not to swim so far out. There is a strong offshore current at this tide."

The big Jew swung sharply about and stared first at Dallas, then seaward toward the girl.

"*Sapristi!* I believe you," said he, and hove himself awkwardly to his feet, raised both huge hands to his mouth, and shouted to the girl. She was swimming on her side, and as the hoarse hail reached her she looked back over her shoulder, then held steadily on.

"*Tiens!*" cried the Jew, "but she will not come."

Again he shouted, and this time the girl threw up one hand with a mocking gesture, but held on seaward with her strong, rhythmic stroke. Sir James had entered the water and was swimming after her.

Dallas looked about him in extreme vexation. There was probably not a man in France who was in the habit of taking as frequent and hazardous risks as he when on the road with his big car; and he was also a fearless hunter of big game and an almost reckless cross-country rider. But he was one of those individuals of nervous temperament, who, while willing to take chances themselves, are nevertheless extremely disturbed at the sight of others exposed to danger. Moreover, he was himself an inlander, a poor swimmer, and one to whom deep water represented treachery and danger. He had never found himself on or in the water without a certain instinctive dread.

"Call her again," he said almost sharply. "My friend swam out there yesterday and had hard work getting back."

The younger man glanced at him with an almost insolent expression, but the Jew nodded his big, shaggy head, then looked doubtfully at Dallas, who observed that his eyes were very large, of a muddy brown, and shot with small, hazel-colored spots.

"Unfortunately, Mademoiselle is of a very obstinate disposition," said he. "She does not like to be told what to do. But she is a very strong swimmer."

Dallas frowned, then glanced over to where the fisherman was working at his boat. As he did so, the man laid down his caulking-iron and walked towards the group.

"Madame has swum out farther than is safe," said he, touching his cap. "At this tide the current is very strong. I do not believe that Madame will be able to get back."

"Then we must shove your boat into the water," said Dallas.

The man shrugged. "I do not believe that the boat would float, M'sieu," he answered. "The caulking is all pulled out of her seams, and the water would run in very fast. Besides this, the oars and sail are in my cabin, up on the top of the cliffs."

The big Jew scowled, then looked anxiously seaward. By this time the girl was over three hundred yards from the beach and swimming straight out, quite unconscious of the strong current on which she was borne—for the splash of the water about her had prevented her hearing what had been shouted. One hundred yards in her wake Sir James was ploughing along in an effort to overtake her.

The Jew puffed out his cheeks and stared at Dallas in doubt and perplexity.

"This is very bad," said he. "These silly women! Is your friend a strong swimmer?"

"Yes," answered Dallas; "but for all that, he had his work cut out for him yesterday, and to-day there is an offshore breeze which will blow the water in their faces when they turn."

"Then," said the Jew suddenly, "leak or no leak, we must get that tub in the water. Come, let us go and look at her."

Followed by the American, he strode over to the clumsy fishing-boat, which was shored up on her beam ends. As the fisherman had said, the oakum had been ripped from her gaping seams.

"Is there no other boat fit to take the water?" asked the Jew in his harsh, raucous voice.

"None except these others, M'sieu," answered the fisherman; "but they are very large and heavy, and it would require at least eight men to launch one."

"Then," said the Jew, "go as quickly as you can and get more men. For we must have one of the boats. *Sapristi!* Why will these women insist on being so contrary!"

The fisherman set off, and Dallas and the Jew stood watching the swimmers with deep anxiety. The handkerchief about the head of the girl had become a mere speck of yellow. Sir James had nearly reached her, and as they looked they saw that both swimmers had turned and were facing the shore. Then presently the two heads approached more nearly together.

For five minutes they watched in silence, then the Jew looked at Dallas and shook his head.

"They are losing ground," said he. "Every minute they are being carried farther out."

As he spoke, both saw the yellow handkerchief flutter violently, waving back and forth.

"*Tiens!*" cried the Jew. "They are in trouble! That water is like ice! Perhaps one of them has been seized by a cramp. Come, my friend, we cannot wait for the men. We must get this tub in the water."

"But she will not float!" cried Dallas.

"*Sapristi!* But she will have to float. I will paddle, and you and the Prince can bail."

"The Prince?"

"Yes. My friend is the Prince Emilio of Rascia. The lady is his cousin. I"—he threw out his big chest—"am the Baron Isidor Rosenthal. Come, we have no time to lose. Let us right this tub and run her down the beach."



He gripped the gunnel in his powerful hands, then kicked out the shores, and with a strong thrust rolled the boat onto her keel. As the beach was very steep and composed of a shingle of round, smooth cobbles, the launching of the boat, heavy as she was, did not present much difficulty.

Rosenthal picked up a plank and flung it upon the thwart, then called to his companion.

"Your Highness must help. There is no time to lose."

There was an imperative note in the harsh voice which permitted of no question. The Prince got up, walked over sulkily, and laid hold of the gunnel opposite Dallas.

"Now, all together!" cried the Jew, and put out his herculean strength, which was far greater than that of the other two men combined. Once started, they ran the heavy boat down the steep beach to the water's edge. Here they paused for breath, and Dallas, looking seaward, was startled to find that the heads of the swimmers had almost disappeared.

"We must wade out with her," panted the Jew. "Come!"

Staggering forward, splashing thigh deep in the water, they soon had the boat afloat, and Dallas, looking inside her, saw the water spouting in through the open seams.

"Ach!" cried the Jew. "But this thing is like a grating. We must be quick, or she will sink before we reach them." He looked at Dallas and grinned, when his bushy black eyebrows were pushed up at their outer corners and his heavy mustache was lifted, baring his big yellow fangs.

"Peste! We shall all be in the water directly—and I cannot swim. Ugh! I have never liked water"—he made a grimace—"except in wine. But it does not matter; there is lumber enough in the tub to float the lot of us until we are picked up." He leaped aboard, and Dallas, rather pale and with lips compressed, followed him and, picking up a bucket, began rapidly to bail.

"Come, lend a hand!" he snapped to the Prince. "There is a pan in the stern."

But the Prince took several backward steps up the beach. "Thank you," said he in a guttural voice, "but I am not such a fool as to go to sea in a boat like that."

"But you must!" cried the Jew. "There is the Lady Thalia."

The Prince shrugged. "It is her own fault," said he; then, turning on his heel, walked away.

"Cowardly little beast!" growled Dallas. "Never mind. Shove off."

Rosenthal picked up the heavy plank, thrust the boat ahead until the water had deepened, then, seating himself in the stern, began to

paddle with long and powerful strokes. Dallas, looking up as he bailed, saw that the Jew was chuckling to himself.

"Ridiculous, my friend, is it not?" growled Rosenthal, without desisting from his tremendous effort. "Ha, ha, ha!" He barked like a hoarse alligator. "Can you swim?"

"Not in my clothes," answered Dallas, who was bailing furiously in an effort to reduce the volume of water before the next open seam should be submerged. "Your Prince Emilio is a filthy little coward, but *you* are the right sort."

"I!" cried the Jew. "But I am a fool, an imbecile! Listen, my friend: if the lady were to drown, I should be the gainer by forty thousand pounds!" He chuckled.

"What?"

"Yes!" cried Rosenthal, paddling with even greater vigor. "*Sapristi*, but this tub is hard to move! Yes, I have sunk forty thousand pounds in silver mines in their accursed country, and now I cannot work them because the Lady Thalia is in the way. It is a long story. If she would marry the Prince, it would be all right, or if she would drown, it would be all right." He increased his efforts until the veins stood out in double cords upon his swarthy forehead.

"If that is true," answered Dallas, bailing rapidly, "I am rather proud to be in the same sinking tub with you."

"*Sapristi!* You flatter me. But I am that kind of a fool. I want to get my money, of course, but one cannot let people drown for the sake of a filthy forty thousand pounds."

They toiled away in silence. Driven by the strong offshore wind and Rosenthal's tireless paddling, the boat moved steadily through the water. Glancing ahead, Dallas saw that the swimmers were nearer. Despite his efforts, the water in the boat was gaining on him, and he wondered how much longer they could keep afloat. He looked shoreward: there was a knot of people gathered on the beach, but he saw no sign of the fisherman returning. Then he glanced at his huge shipmate: the Jew's yellow teeth were bared as they clinched his nether lip; his big nostrils were dilated, and his face congested. Merely to wield the heavy plank which he gripped in his thick, bejewelled fingers would have been a feat of strength for the ordinary man, but Rosenthal was getting a powerful shove on the water with every stroke. Moreover, he was constantly shifting his paddle from one side to the other, giving Dallas a shower-bath each time that he swung it over his head. The young man observed how the huge deltoids bulged the shoulders of the Jew's serge coat, and presently the seams ripped under the strain. But the paddling went on with the unabating rhythm of a machine, nor was there any symptom of fatigue.

As they drew near to the swimmers, Dallas discovered, first to his

relief, then to his irritation, that they were paddling along easily and comfortably, and that Sir James was making an effort at conversation. He looked at Rosenthal, who grinned.

"So!" said the Jew. "They seem to be quite comfortable."

As the boat reached them, the two swimmers laid hold of the gunnel. With a muscular effort of his strong arms, Sir James hove himself aboard, then, turning, took the girl by both wrists and lifted her out of the water and onto one of the thwarts, where she sat like a lovely mermaid, her bare arms flashing and her legs hanging over the side.

"I say," exclaimed the Englishman, "have you no oars?"

"No," snapped Dallas; "and you had better get hold of that basin and throw the water out, or we'll have no boat either."

The girl glanced sharply at his face, then dropped her head and stared into the sea. Rosenthal had laid down his paddle and was opening and shutting his cramped fingers. Then, taking a pen-knife from his pocket, he slashed off a piece of rope from the painter, quickly unlaidd it, and began to force the rope-yarn into an open seam.

"If you will help with the bailing, Mademoiselle," said he, "and you"—he glanced at Dallas—"will help me to caulk, we may be able to keep our ship afloat."

For several minutes the four worked rapidly and in silence, Dallas and Rosenthal plugging the open seams while the girl and Sir James bailed. The Jew's suggestion proved an excellent one, as the seams of the lower strakes had already been caulked and the water was coming in through the higher ones, which were within reach. It soon became apparent that they were gaining rapidly upon the leak. But the boat had by this time drifted over a mile from the shore, the wind was freshening, and there was no sign of any one coming to their rescue. When the level of the water became only ankle-deep, Dallas took the basin from the girl's hand, then slipped off his coat.

"Put this on, Mademoiselle," said he. "The breeze is chilly."

She made a little gesture of dissent.

"Put it on, put it on," said Dallas, with a touch of impatience. "One might as well drown as catch pneumonia."

Again the girl's eyes turned on him with their searching, curious look. Dallas noticed that they were of a deep amber-color and marvellously clear. He also observed that they held in themselves as much expression as one finds in the sum of all the features of most people.

Almost with brusqueness he held out the coat for the girl to put on.

"Come," said he, giving the garment an impatient twitch. Again her eyes flashed up at his, this time with an expression of resentment. But some quality in the cool gray ones of the man caused them to drop

instantly. With a muttered word of acknowledgment, the girl slipped her round white arms into the sleeves. Dallas, his manner that of a kind but rather impatient nurse, buttoned the garment snugly to her soft throat, then gave it a little twitch, drawing the skirt over the bare knees.

"Now you had better bail a little," he said, "not hard, but enough to keep you from getting chilled."

Sir James had stopped his bailing and was working at the open seam. The wind was freshening and carried a certain sharpness which was soon felt by the Englishman, after his long swim in the cold water of the Channel.

"I s'ssay," he began, "you m'm'might have b'b'brought our clothes."

Rosenthal pulled off his coat and handed it to him.

"Put this on," said he. "When we came after you, we were thinking less of your comfort than of your safety. Besides, it looked as if we should all be in the water before many minutes, and no doubt we should have been but for the quick work of Mr.—" He looked inquiringly at Dallas.

"I am Stephen Dallas," said the young man. "My friend is Sir James Fenwick."

The big Jew lifted his hat with a flourish.

"Permit me to thank you both," said he, "for the service which you have rendered to the Lady Thalia—of Novibazar," he added as if in afterthought. "I"—he rose awkwardly to his feet, placing four fingers on his bulging chest—"am the Baron Isidor Rosenthal, of Hayti and Buda-Pesth."

"Ch'ch'chawmed," chattered Sir James. Dallas compromised with a brief nod.

"Is Prince Emilio also of Novibazar?" he asked. There was an intonation in his voice which caused the girl again to glance at him sharply. Her clear eyes slightly contracted.

"Yes—unfortunately," she answered in a low, throaty voice.

"I quite agree with you," snapped Dallas. Sir James glanced at his friend in surprise.

"Oh, c'e'come, Stephen," said he. "You are not very p'p'polite."

"I don't mean to be. The Prince declined to come to the assistance of Lady Thalia. We needed him to help bail."

"N'n'no! Really?" Sir James stared.

There was a moment of awkward silence.

"Please pardon my ignorance," said Dallas, "but just where is Novibazar?"

"Ig'ig'ignoramus," shivered Sir James. The girl slightly raised her pretty chin.

"Well, then," snapped Dallas, "where is it, if you know so much about it?"

"It is n'n'near"—Sir James glanced critically at the girl, in a violent effort to guess at her parent stock—"n'n'near Austria."

"Humph," grunted Dallas. "So are Italy and Switzerland and Germany and Russia and the Balkan Peninsula."

"*Sapristi!* But I can tell you where it is," growled Rosenthal. "It is a handful of hills between Servia and Bosnia, that is owned by Turkey and governed by Austria, and it is full of holes where I have buried forty thousand pounds."

"And where we Albanians," cried the girl fiercely, "have buried forty thousand warriors—and more!"

"Ah," said Sir James. "Then you are Alba'ba'banian."

"Yes." The girl spoke a soft but strongly accented English. "I am Albanian." She drew herself up with as much dignity as was possible for a lady sitting with her bare legs cuddled under her, and buttoned up in a man's serge coat. "I am Albanian, or Shkipetari, as we say. Our blood is the purest in Europe. We are the direct descendants from the ancient Illyrians. We should be to-day an independent State if it were not for cowards like Emilio and"—she tossed her head—"Jew adventurers."

"Permit me to remind you of the fact," said Dallas severely, "that you, personally, would be paddling around the English Channel if it were not for Baron Rosenthal, who, although he cannot swim, embarked to your rescue in a leaky, open boat, with neither oars nor sail."

For an instant the girl stared; then she leaped to her feet and stood with the water swirling about her pretty ankles. A sudden flush had risen under the pallor of her fair skin, and her eyes were sparkling with anger.

"I will not be spoken to in that way!" she cried. "Nor will I be under obligation either to Baron Rosenthal or yourself. I did not ask you to rescue me." She slipped off Dallas's coat and stood for an instant with her superb figure straight and poised as if to plunge over the side and into the sea.

"Sit down, Mademoiselle," said Dallas sharply. "There is no use in making things any more complicated."

"B'b'brute," shivered Sir James. "D'd'don't notice him, Lady Th'Th'Thalia. Or, if you l'l'like, jump in again, and I will g'g'go with you."

The girl turned and glanced at him. More color rushed into her face, and her lips began to twitch. Then she turned toward Rosenthal and smiled.

"Mr. Dallas is right," she said. "I am sorry, Rosenthal."



"It is nothing," said the Baron. "We Jews are accustomed to such remarks. Come, children, let us stop squabbling."

The girl reseated herself on the thwart, and Dallas, a little ashamed of himself, picked up the coat and turned to the girl.

"I am sorry I was rude," said he. "Won't you please put this on again?"

She gave him a forgiving smile and slipped into his coat.

"You must not judge the Lady Thalia from her cousin Emilio," said Rosenthal. "The Prince is of quite different stock. He is a Serb, and connected to Mademoiselle only by marriage. His title is merely one of courtesy, because he is descended from a line of feudal chiefs."

"We have no titles which correspond to yours in England," said the girl, "but many of them are just as old."

"Myself," said Rosenthal, "I am a Papal baron."

"A P'P'Papal baron!" cried Sir James.

"Yes," replied the Jew, "and with good right. *Sapristi!* But with very good right! My title was conferred upon me by the Pope himself because I prevented the massacre of a whole Christian community by a swarm of Moslem fanatics. It cost me a thousand Turkish pounds—and a bullet in the ribs."

"G'g'good for you!" cried Sir James as heartily as his congealed condition would permit.

"Here comes a boat!" cried the Lady Thalia.

All four looked back toward the distant shore, where they saw a brown sail fluttering in the breeze. Directly it bellied out, and a few minutes later a heavy fishing-boat came foaming up and rounded to alongside.

The castaways quickly transhipped, when their own leaky vessel was boarded by two of the fishermen, who stepped the mast, and both vessels started to beat back toward the beach.

That night, as Dallas was smoking a final cigar on the terrace of the little hotel, he was joined by Sir James, who had quite recovered from his immersion.

"I have been walking on the beach with the Lady Thalia," said the Englishman cheerfully.

"So I observed," answered Dallas. "Your philandering was likewise noted by Rosenthal and the Prince. The former laughed, but the latter appeared to be displeased."

"The beastly little rotter! He would have been even less pleased if he had known what the Princess was telling me."

"The result of which is, I presume, that you have decided to elope, and wish me to lend you the car."

"Right-o!" answered Sir James cheerfully. "But that is not all. We look upon you personally to conduct the elopement."

"Well," replied Dallas shortly, "I won't."

"Don't be pig-headed, Stephen. The Lady Thalia is an exceedingly clever and attractive girl. She has honored me by her confidence."

Dallas grunted.

"The whole situation," said Sir James, "is very interesting. It appears that the kingdom of Servia wants to annex this *sanjak*, or district, which is known as Novibazar, and which belongs to Turkey, although by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 it came under the administrative control of Austria-Hungary, together with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Now, the Prince Emilio, backed by Rosenthal, who is half wolf, half fox, is intriguing with the Servian government, and the Lady Thalia has discovered a plot by which they intend to stir up a frontier war with Servia, which will give that country a good excuse for grabbing Novibazar. There is reason to believe that Austria will not be sorry to see it exchange Turkish ownership for Servian."

"What does the Prince get out of it?"

"He is to receive a lump sum of money and a governorship which will permit him to squeeze the people even tighter than he has already, while Rosenthal is to get certain concessions to work his silver mines."

"And the Lady Thalia?"

"Ah, there's the hitch. The Prince's people are all South Slavonic Serbs and precisely the same breed as the Servians themselves. They can't be made to see the sense of fighting with Servia, which is quite natural, as all of their warfare from time immemorial has been against the Turks and with the Lady Thalia's Shkipetari. So what the Prince and Rosenthal are trying to do is to persuade the girl to incite her people to start a ruction on the Servian frontier."

"And she won't do it?"

"No, she's far too clever. The girl is really patriotic; she hates Servia like poison, and so do her people, who are mostly Mohammedans, while the Prince's crowd, like the Servians, profess Christianity. But the Lady Thalia is intelligent enough to see how much her country has advanced under Austrian rule, and now she strongly favors the annexation of Novibazar by Austria-Hungary. She says that she has positive information that Bulgaria is shortly going to assert her own independence, and that when this happens Austria will grab Bosnia and Herzegovina, and she wants Novibazar to be included in this annexation."

"How does she hope to bring this about?"

"Merely by keeping her people quiet until Bulgaria effects her *coup d'état*. Her Shkipetari are forever flaying Emilio's Serbs, and what Thalia wants to do now is to get out there and persuade the

chieftains of the clans to keep the peace for another six months. You see, failing to persuade her to assist in their plans, Emilio might try to stir up a fight between his faction and hers, and as the fighting would be along the Servian frontier, even that might give Servia a pretext for interference, although it is really Turkey's job."

"You make my head swim," said Dallas. "But if the Princess is so anxious to hold in her hairy mountaineers, what is she doing here in France?"

"Ah, now here we come to another complication. Did you notice that very pretty maid who took the girl's *peignoir* when she went into the water?"

"I did."

Sir James leaned toward his friend and dropped his voice: "She is the Countess Rubitzki!"

"Indeed! It struck me that she was rather classy for a maid. And who is the Countess Rubitzki? Upon my word, I feel very common in this crowd!"

"She is Polish, and all her family are rampant nihilists. They have been mixed up in bloodthirsty plots to slaughter every monarch in Europe—and she herself has been more or less implicated."

"Really? A nice young person to be trailing around with your innamorata!"

"The Lady Thalia met her a good many years ago in Pesth, and they have always been bosom friends. Just now her father and brother are in hiding, and there are extradition papers for the whole lot in almost every country in Europe. When the chase got too warm the Countess went to Thalia in Paris, and since then has been living with her, disguised as her maid. The two have been spending the summer in a quiet little place in Normandy, where the Prince and Rosenthal discovered them. Rosenthal immediately recognized the Countess, and is now using this knowledge to coerce the Lady Thalia. The poor girl is at her wits' end. They have tried twice to give Rosenthal the slip, but the big Jew seems to have second-sight. What she wants to do now is to run away and get back to Novibazar."

"I see. And she has persuaded you to take the oath of allegiance and help her carry out her plans."

"Quite so," replied Sir James calmly. "I have taken it for both of us."

"For me too? How kind of you!"

"Don't be disagreeable, Stephen. It will be no end of a lark! And just think of those two lovely girls hounded about from place to place by these two semi-civilized bounders!"

"Are you trying to make me cry?"

"All it means," said Sir James, ignoring the irony of his friend,

"is a night run to Paris. Once there, they will want to keep out of sight for a few days, so I told her that you would no doubt be very glad to put your apartment at their disposal. You can come and stop with me at the studio."

"Infatuated insular ass!" was the polite comment of the American.

"Um—ah!" Sir James spun his monocle about his finger. "If you really must be nasty about it, old chap, I will give them the studio, and go and stop with you."

"Are you sure that you would be comfortable, James?" inquired Dallas solicitously.

"It would be only for a day or two. Then we can take your car and the two girls and make a run for Fiume, via Switzerland, the Simplon, and Venice. At Fiume we would get a steamer for Cettinje, and then overland for—for—what the deuce is the name of that blooming country?"

"Novibazar. Oh, this is so sudden!"

"We will start," said Sir James placidly, "to-night. Rosenthal and the Prince have retired. As soon as you can get your car ready, the *garçon* will bring down the ladies' things. I have arranged everything. All that you have got to do is to drive the car."

"And pay the bills."

"Don't be vulgar, Stephen. You have often complained to me about having had to lie awake nights worrying over what to do with your surplus income. Really, old chap, you astonish me!"

"I beg your pardon. Pray go on."

"It can't be much over two hundred kilometres to Paris, from this place. Fact is, nothing could be jollier than a fast run on a lovely moonlight night like this."

"Unless, perhaps, to feel that we were performing a disinterested and unselfish act," said Dallas, in his driest voice.

"Jus' so!" agreed Sir James, with his usual cheer.

Dallas lit a cigarette and blew the smoke meditatively upward.

"Look here, James," said he, "this all sounds like a lovely lark, I'll admit. The ladies are very pretty, and the Prince a filthy little coward, but I rather like old Rosenthal, and hate to play him a scurvy trick. Besides, the whole affair is distinctively none of our business."

"Ah, but you forget, old chap, that I've already agreed for you. You see, you're pledged—in a manner of speaking. Why, bless my soul, those two girls are packing up their things now!"

Dallas sighed deeply, then turned to his friend with an air of weary resignation.

"Oh, very well; then come on, Don Quixote. I'll run them as far as Paris. But I'll be hanged if I'll give up my apartment. Tell Armand to get the car ready at once; I will go up and pack"

A few minutes later, as the two friends walked across the court to where the big, high-powered car was garaged, they were met by Dallas's *mécanicien*, an alert, intelligent French youth.

"Do not strike a match, Messieurs," said he in a low voice. "Some careless idiot has upset a *bidon* of essence, and the place is flooded."

"I should say it was," growled Dallas, sniffing the reek of petrol. "Who did that?"

"It must have been the chauffeur of the Prince," said the man. "We had better push the car out of the court before starting the motor or lighting the lamps. The *garçon* will lend us a hand."

Very quietly the four men rolled the big car out upon the road. A full moon was blazing down from the zenith, and the sea lay sparkling and flashing in its brilliant light.

"I wonder," whispered Dallas, "what the fellow was doing with essence at this time of night."

Nobody answered, and a moment later two figures, closely veiled and followed by the *garçon* carrying two big valises, emerged from the back door of the inn and approached the car. Dallas, who had seated himself and was examining his levers, merely touched his cap. Sir James stepped forward and helped the ladies into the tonneau, where he proceeded to tuck them up with great care. Glancing over his shoulder, Dallas observed the face of the Countess, and was struck by its singular beauty and the classic purity of feature.

"Nihilist—rubbish!" he thought to himself. "She looks more like a school-girl. Can't be more than twenty at the outside." He leaned forward and addressed his *mécanicien*. "Crank the motor and get in," said he. "We will stop down the road to light the lamps."

The man obeyed. The hotel menials, who saw in the whole performance merely an adventure of gallantry, stepped back and touched their caps. Sir James took the seat at Dallas's side, and the *mécanicien* seated himself upon the floor. Dallas let in the clutch, and they glided out upon the gleaming road.

A kilometre from the hotel he brought the car to a stop.

"Light up," said he to the *mécanicien*, then, twisting about in his seat, looked at the Lady Thalia and smiled.

"Now, just where is it that you wish me to take you?" he asked drily. "What particular part of Novibazar?"

Through her chiffon veil, he caught the answering gleam of the girl's white teeth.

"Dakabar, if you please," she answered without a moment's hesitation. "That is up on a plateau of the North Albanian Alps."

"Precisely. Perhaps we had better stop for a bite in Paris, then *déjeuner* at Munich, and dinner at Buda-Pesth. From there on, it will be a nice moonlight spin across the plains of Hungary to Belgrade."



The two girls laughed, the Lady Thalia in her throaty, low-pitched contralto and her companion in a deliciously clear and contagious higher note. Dallas observed that when she laughed she threw back her head, her very blue eyes—which looked black in the moonlight—almost closed, and her pretty lips curved upward like the mouth of a bacchante.

"I have not yet presented you to my fellow prisoner," said the Lady Thalia. "Countess Rubitski, Mr. Dallas and Sir James Fenwick."

The two men bowed.

"For the next three kilometres, until we strike the big Dieppe-Paris route," said Dallas, "the road is a bit rough. I hope," he continued, looking at the Countess with mock anxiety, "that Countess Rubitzki does not happen to have any—er—bombs among her personal effects."

The Polish lady elevated her pretty nose, the classic character of which was slightly marred, or improved, according to the taste of the observer, by the suspicion of a tilt. Her rather wide mouth—Anglo-Saxon in its firmness, though Oriental in its softer sensibilities—became a trifle haughty.

"If Monsieur is afraid," said she, "he had better take me back to the hotel. There are a great many things more dangerous than bombs."

"I well believe you," said Dallas. "My word, I don't see why you should need to bother with explosives! I am sure no sovereign would refuse to abdicate if you were to ask him real prettily to do so. Tell me, are you really blacklisted?"

"So Rosenthal has told us," said the Lady Thalia.

"Never you mind," said Sir James comfortingly. "Once out in the Balkans, you can lie doggo for a few months, and the whole thing will blow over. Then you can promise to be good, and we will see what we can do."

The *mécanicien* had lit the lamps, and the powerful reflectors were rivalling the moonlight in their vivid twin beams.

"Everything is ready, M'sieu," said the man, wiping his hands.

"Very well," said Dallas. "Get in." He started ahead, and the conversation was for the moment interrupted.

Proceeding at as fast a pace as the character of the road would permit, they presently turned into the big Paris-Dieppe highway, where Dallas began to raise his speed until presently the monster bearing them appeared to be rushing through the shimmering night like a planet torn from its orbit. On either side the tall poplar trunks tore past, like the palings of a fence, while the gleaming road before them suggested a broad band of flashing white ribbon which was being flicked into the wheels as a tape snaps into the roll of the tape measure.

Higher mounted the speed, and still higher; the route was perfect, free of traffic and brilliantly lighted, while the damp night air seemed to combine with the fuel to give the highest explosive power in the six smoothly running cylinders.

Neither of the women in the tonneau had ever experienced such speed, which, terrific as it was, became still more intensified by the vague illusiveness of their moonlit surroundings. Breathless and giddy, they clung to the sides of the tonneau as the flying car tore up the short kilometres and flung them astern. Dallas, a brilliant driver and a hopeless "speed-maniac," was beginning to feel the deep, encompassing repose of soul with which such a pace always enveloped his nervous disposition, and Sir James was mentally conjecturing on which particular star he would strike should anything go wrong, when suddenly the tense, vibrant hum of the spinning mechanism began to drop in tone. Deeper and deeper it grew; the fierce buffetings of air diminished in their force. Dallas squirmed in his seat and turned a startled face to his *mécanicien*, who flashed his pocket-lamp upon the oil-cups. Then, as they were breasting a gentle slope, the cylinders began to miss, the motor stopped, the terrific momentum was quickly lost, the car slowed, arrested its wild course with a whine of entreaty when Dallas flung on his brakes and sat in speechless anger, staring at his man.

## PART II.

"*Nom de Dieu!*" gasped Dallas. "No essence!"

"Impossible, M'sieu!" cried the *mécanicien*. "I filled the tanks this afternoon."

"Then there must be a leak," snarled Dallas, pale and furious. "It was the escaping essence which we smelled in the garage."

"That cannot be, M'sieu. The tank and piping are new. The essence in the garage came from an overturned *bidon*. I found it myself, still with the essence——"

"Then what the devil is it? I tell you that there is no essence! It cannot be anything else."

He leaped down upon the road; Sir James did likewise, and the *mécanicien* produced a measure. A hasty examination showed that the tank was empty.

"It is just as I said," snarled Dallas, furious more at the sudden and unexpected relaxation from his high nervous exhilaration than at the predicament in which they found themselves. "Get out of the way." He himself examined the drip-cock before the *mécanicien* could touch it. The tap was firmly closed.

"Then it must be a leak," he growled.

"Impossible, M'sieu," protested the unhappy man.

"Then what is it?"

The *mécanicien* pulled off his cap and scratched his head. His bird-like face betrayed a growing suspicion.

"If some one at the hotel could have stolen our essence——" he began, then broke out explosively: "But the garage was locked! No one could have got in but that camel of a chauffeur of the Prince."

"Um! Ah!" observed Sir James pensively. Dallas's face was torn between rage and doubt.

"I have heard of such things," he muttered. "What sort of a pig was he, Armand?"

"I think that he was Hungarian, M'sieu, and a big, ugly brute of a fellow. He was not at all amiable."

"What a beastly low trick," said Sir James calmly, "to leave us stranded for a few francs' worth of petrol!"

Dallas compressed his lips and held his peace. He was far too enraged to express himself appropriately with ladies in the tonneau. The latter had made no comment, but sat awaiting developments in the bewildered silence peculiar to passengers when things go wrong with the motor.

They had stopped on a deserted section of the road, so far as one could discover. Across the bleak, rolling hills a light or two sparkled from some farm-house, but there was no sign of town or village. Although they were on the highway, it was very possible that they might have to wait for some time before another motor-car should pass, as in France automobiling at night is not the popular pastime it is in America, where so many men are engaged in business affairs throughout the day.

In the glare of the lamps Dallas consulted his road map and discovered that there was a village about three kilometres ahead of them. He turned to his *mécanicien*.

"You will have to walk to this place, Saint Croix, Armand," said he. "You will certainly find petrol there. Get a few *bidons* and then secure a carriage and return as quickly as you can. If a car arrives in the meantime, we will try to borrow enough to go after you."

The *mécanicien* hurried off, and Dallas turned to the ladies.

"This is very annoying," said he, "but it ought not to delay us for very long. It looks as if some scoundrel, possibly that animal of the Prince Emilio, has stolen our petrol. It seems to be my unfortunate destiny to try to rescue the Lady Thalia in boats without oars and motor-cars without fuel."

"It is not your fault," replied the girl. "The night is lovely, and we are so happy to have made our escape from Emilio and that dreadful Rosenthal that the delay does not matter. I am only sorry to make you so much trouble."

"The moonlight is delicious," murmured the Polish lady, who had pushed up her lunettes.

"I say," observed Sir James, who, being young and British, turned naturally to physical effort as a means of killing time, "would n't you like to get out and stretch your—um—ah—take a little stroll?"

"Yes," said Dallas, with irony; "you've had no exercise to-day, barring an hour's swim and shifting half the water in the Channel."

"Nevertheless," said the Lady Thalia, "I should love a little walk."

"And I," said the Countess, "a cigarette."

Sir James threw open the door of the tonneau and handed out the Lady Thalia as if she had been a creation of moon-webs and spun glass.

"We will walk down the road a bit, Stephen," said he. "If anything happens, blow your horn."

Dallas grunted, and, pulling out his cigarette-case, offered it to the Countess, then struck a match, and was forced to admire the glow of the flame against the girl's fresh, lovely features. She threw back her head and blew the smoke slowly into the face of the outraged moon.

"Tell me," said she, "do you really mean to take us all the way to Turkey?"

"Turkey!"

"Yes, Novibazar—that is a Turkish *sanjak*, you know, although under Austrian administration."

"I did n't know. Do you want me to take you there?" He leaned both elbows on the rim of the tonneau and looked at her curiously.

"Of course we want you to; but I don't know of any reason why you should."

"Nor I," said Dallas, with an utter absence of undue gallantry. "But I can think of a good many why I should not."

The Countess laughed and glanced at him from under the corners of her long, dark eyelashes.

"All this is Sir James's doing, is it not?" she asked.

"Entirely. I am merely the *deus ex machina*."

"What is that?"

"At present, a helpless god; let us say, Cupid with his wings clipped."

"You hate to stop on the road, do you not?"

"Yes, don't you?"

"N' no."

"Excuse me. But, you see, when I start to do a thing, I like to finish it without a break. Don't you?"

"Yes. But then, you see, I was not doing anything—except being frightened nearly to death."

"At what, pray?"

"The speed. You are a very daring driver, Mr. Dallas. One feels utter confidence, but at the same time the mere pace is terrifying."

"But a nihilist should not be frightened at anything."

"Zut!" The Countess struck the side of the car sharply with her small hand. "But I am not really a nihilist, Mr. Dallas; I am merely the victim of circumstance. Really, I would rather be killed myself than to hurt any living thing."

There was an earnest note in the girl's voice that caused Dallas to glance at her keenly.

"Then why——"

"Because—oh, I could never make you understand."

"Try," said Dallas gently.

"It's difficult. You are American; I am Polish. You grew up in an atmosphere of liberty in thought and speech and action, and I in one of oppression. I was taught that the assassination of despots was fine and noble. All my family lived in a mesh of intrigue, and some"—her breath came quickly—"have paid the penalty. But when I grew older I began to feel that it was all so cruel. I am weak, perhaps, but I cannot plot to kill people!" Her voice grew plaintive. "I do not want suffering, nor to cause it. I want sunshine and flowers and sweetness and——"

"And love," said Dallas quietly.

The Countess looked up at the moon.

"Perhaps. I don't know much about the latter, but it sounds rather nice." She laughed.

Dallas regarded her thoughtfully. "You have about as much right to be a nihilist as I have," said he in his dry voice. "What you really need is a husband, and, in the course of time, a—ahem—family. Then you would not have time to think of blowing anybody up, unless it were the cook, and you could n't do that or she'd leave. Tell me, if you were to get out of this mess, would you cut the whole thing for the future?"

"Yes," whispered the Countess.

"Promise?"

"Oh, yes. But why?"

"Because if you'll promise, I will agree to see you safely to Novibazar."

"Mr. Dallas!"

"Yes. You are much too nice to be mixed up with a bloodthirsty gang of murderers or to be in the clutches of men like the Prince and Rosenthal."

The Countess dropped her hand upon his arm as it rested on the rim of the tonneau. Her eyes looked deep into his, and something in their expression, or perhaps it was the magic of her touch, sent a



thrill through the young man. Dallas could be outwardly as unmoved as an Iroquois when his whole, sensitive inner nature was warm with the impulse of the moment.

"That is very sweet of you," said the girl softly, "but it is asking far too much!"

"You haven't asked it. It was James. We will say that it is for the sake of the Lady Thalia."

"But I don't want to say that it is *all* for Thalia! I want just a little of it to be for *me*!"

"Then it is for you."

"But why?"

"Because—oh, because I am an Altrurian, and a reformer of young ladies with nihilistic tendencies, and feel sorry for the poor kings."

The Countess slightly raised her chin.

"I had hoped that it might be something more—chiv—er—roman—er—interesting. And what is an Altrurian, Mr. Dallas?"

"An Altrurian is a person who does for nothing what most people want to be paid for."

"Oh!" The Countess regarded him thoughtfully. "And you are that sort of person?"

"In moments of folly, and when under the influence of—James."

"Then you consider this a moment of folly?"

"Worse!" Dallas looked deep into her eyes. "It is a moment of madness!"

The Countess dropped her elbows on the rim of the seat, rested her pretty chin on the knuckles of one hand, and regarded the young man fixedly. Her lovely face was filled with the softest of shadows, and her deep blue eyes shone like stars after the moon has set.

"But you don't want any pay," said she.

"Not for myself. Only for you—and the poor devils of kings."

"Why are you so sorry for the wretched kings?"

"I'd be sorry for anybody so unfortunate as to be in your bad graces. Then a person in grave danger is always a fit object for compassion."

"And how about a person in my good graces?" asked the Countess mischievously.

"That," said Dallas, "would be more dangerous still."

"Indeed!"

"I think so. What if you happened to get jealous—with your knowledge of unpleasant explosives!"

"You are chaffing me!"

"Not a bit of it! I should n't dare!"

The Countess tossed her head. "For a man who drives a car as you do, it seems to me that you are singularly lacking in courage!"

"Ah, but, you see, you can't drive a woman."

"Would you be afraid to try?"

"Very! One always goes around in such a small circle that it is impossible to tell who is in the lead."

"Ignorance," observed the Countess to the moon, "is sometimes said to be bliss."

"Very likely—while it lasts."

"Coward!"

"Guilty!"

"But, in spite of your craven fears, here you are, knight-errant!"

"That is James's fault."

"Then it stops at Paris," said the Countess, with decision.

"Just as you wish."

"What is *your* wish?"

"To be of service"—Dallas smiled—"and to reform you from the evil of your ways."

"But—why?"

"I have told you. Call it altruism."

"I'm afraid," said the girl slowly, "that it is pure kindness of heart, and must cease at Paris."

"Very well."

"What?"

"I said, 'Very well.'"

The Countess leaned back in the tonneau and folded her hands in her lap.

"Have a cigarette?" said Dallas, offering his case. She took one, lighted it, then glanced at the moon, that treacherous counsellor and lenient, vise-mouthed chaperon.

"Still," said the Countess presently, in a meditative voice, "I don't suppose I ought to be selfish. There's Thalia—and Sir James."

"Quite so," said Dallas drily.

The girl beat a little tattoo on the back of the seat with her gloved fingers, then looked at Dallas aslant.

"It would be a lark," said she. "Do you really want to take us?"

"Yes. I have already undertaken to see you safely out of your troubles. But remember, it's a bargain. Do you promise to reform?"

"Yes," murmured the Countess; "I promise. Oh, you Americans!" She turned suddenly and flung herself against the rim of the tonneau, her face very near that of the young man. "I beg your pardon," said she softly. "I should have said—you American!"

Dallas took her hand in his strong, nervous grip and gave it a slight squeeze.

"Then it's agreed," said he.

"It's agreed. Oh, look! Here comes a car!"

The young man turned and looked back over the road upon which they had come. Far in the distance he caught the sudden flare of a search-light. At the same moment the cheerful voice of Sir James hailed him from the gloom ahead:

"I say, Stephen, here comes a car."

"I see it," said Dallas. "We will stop them and try to beg a little essence."

With painstaking care, the Englishman placed the Lady Thalia in the tonneau. "We saw that fellow's lights," said he, "and hurried back."

Far down the road there appeared another vivid flash, then two lurid eyes, as the car swung around a slight curve. Apparently it was high-powered, for on striking the foot of the slope upon which Dallas had stopped it came flying up with no change of speed. A moment later Dallas's car fell within the beams of the twin lights, when there came the sound of shifting gears as the new arrival, a big limousine car, glided gently alongside and came to a stop. At the same moment there reached the ears of the runaways a harsh, discordant laugh.

"*Rosenthal!*" cried the Countess.

Sir James flicked away his cigarette. "I say, old chap," he drawled to Dallas, "I believe that we've been had!"

Three dark figures descended from the car, and two of them approached. Rosenthal was in advance, looming dark and Titanesque. At his elbow came the chauffeur, and Dallas's quick eye caught the flash of some metallic object in the man's hand. The Prince remained standing by the door of the limousine.

"Looks like a row," muttered Sir James. "Go slow, Stephen; remember that we are in France."

As the big Jew approached, his raucous laugh burst out again; then, observing the silent and ominous attitudes of the two young men, he stopped.

"Goot efening!" said he, in thick, guttural English. He took off his hat with a flourish. "Excuse me if I laugh, but this is so very, very funny! Vell, vell, boys vill be boys, is it not?"

A deep chuckle rumbled in his chest.

"I must say that I fail to see anything funny about it!" snapped Dallas. "We invite two ladies to take a moonlight ride, and then get stalled on a lonely stretch of road because some thief has stolen all the essence out of our tank."

"No!" cried Rosenthal in a tone of mock surprise.

"You might let us have enough to go on with, you know," suggested Sir James placidly.

The big Jew's laugh gurgled deeper. "Goot!" said he. "Be a

sport, as they say in the States. After all, it would be no more than fair if we were to give you some petrol—because it is yours that we are now burning in our motor! Ha, ha, ha!”

“Ours!” snarled Dallas. “Have you got the cheek to tell me that you stole my essence?” He took a step forward. Sir James lounged easily at his elbow, his hands in the pockets of his ulster.

“Hold on!” The Jew raised one big arm and shook his finger at the two men. “Don’t do any’ting foolish, my dear boys. Let me state my case. You made a little plot to steal away our ladies. That was all right; I do not blame you. I was once a youngster myself! But now I have a wife in Buda-Pesth whom I love very much.”

“Oh, rot!” snapped Dallas.

“That is not polite, Mr. Dallas,” remonstrated Rosenthal, “but no matter. When you made this little plan, you did not appreciate two things: first, who those ladies were, and, second, that you were playing the game with Isidor Rosenthal!” He smote his chest with one big hand.

“The game is not yet played out, my dear baron,” murmured Sir James.

“I beg your pardon, Sir Chames.” Again he shook his finger at the two men. “But do not try any’ting rash, because I could take one of you boys in each hand and cr’rack your heads together!” The harsh voice had become stern and menacing. “More than that, the Prince has a revolver, and would, I am afraid, be fool enough to shoot it at you. Then here is the *mécanicien* with a spanner! It is no goot! It is not worth while. Besides, there is something more. You do not know about this lady’s maid of the Lady Thalia.”

“Yes,” said Dallas impatiently; “we know all about her. She is the Countess Rubitzki and said to be a nihilist.”

“She is a nihilist,” said Rosenthal.

“Bosh!” said the Englishman.

“It is no bosh, Sir Chames. There are extradition papers out for her in France and Italy and Austria. If she is taken, she goes to Siberia.”

“It makes no difference,” retorted Dallas. “Maid or nihilist or countess, she is our guest, and she is not to be interfered with.”

“By Chingo!” exclaimed the Jew, “but that is goot spirit! Believe me, I am sorry to spoil this little spree, but business is business, and there is that matter of my forty thousand pounds. Come, my friends; we do not want a row. You must see that you are outclassed. *Mein Gott!*” he exclaimed in vexation. “Who are you boys to pit your brains and bodies against Isidor Rosenthal? I have made rebellions in South America and the Balkans, and all the West Indies takes off its hat to me. I have put presidents on their thrones, and out-financed

statesmen, and received the tanks of potentates. Come, ve vill not have any troubles! You vould not be so foolish!" He turned and said a few sharp words to the chauffeur, whereat the man walked back to the car and put away the spanner. Rosenthal turned again to Dallas and threw out his hands, palms upward. "So you see, my dear boys, I play big games. And I play little ones, too! I knew you vould try to steal the Lady Thalia! It had to be—after Sir Chames went valking mit her on the beach. So, not to make a r'row by the hotel, and because ve needed some fuel, I ordered our man to draw the essence from your tank and put it into ours. There vas forty litres, which at thirty-five centimes makes fourteen francs. I vill gif you the money."

He drew his purse from his pocket, counted out some silver, and offered it to Dallas.

"I don't want your filthy money!" growled the American.

"Take it, my friend. Business is business." Rosenthal stepped to the car and put the money on the seat, then, turning, he brushed past Sir James and laid his hand on the latch of the door to the tonneau. "Come, ladies," said he.

But it was just here that Rosenthal, hardened adventurer and keen judge of men that he was, committed a *faux pas*. Accustomed all his life to carrying his wishes through by the sheer weight of his tremendous vitality, he would not admit the possibility of any active resistance to his will. But in all his rough dealings with men, the Jew had never had much contact of a hostile character with thoroughbreds. As he truthfully said, he was physically powerful enough to take the two young men, one in either hand, and knocked their heads together, and this and the fact that they were unarmed and apparently at a loss seemed to him quite enough to insure his carrying off the affair high-handedly.

But the big Jew had quite failed to consider the fact that there is a certain type of man who under given conditions will fight to the last, not through any hope of winning out, but merely because he feels that he owes it to himself.

Both Dallas and Sir James belonged to this class. The Englishman had been standing with his feet apart and his thumbs hooked into the side pockets of his ulster. His cap was pulled down over his eyes, and his face looked calm and unruffled. But as the Jew stepped forward and laid his hand upon the latch, Sir James swung easily about, taking the weight of his athletic body on his forward foot.

"Oh, look here, Baron," said he in a voice of calmest protest. "This won't do at all. We can't have you making free with our guests like that, you know. Suppose you take your hand off that door."

"Sir Chames," said Rosenthal in his harsh voice, "I am very sorry, but these ladies are in our care, and they must come with us."

His great hand fell on the latch, and as it did so Sir James's fist shot out. So quick was the blow, and so true and hard, that it would have been all that was necessary to stretch the ordinary man upon the road. But Rosenthal was very far from being the ordinary man. Although confident that he would meet with no resistance, yet as the veteran of many a swift and deadly *mêlée* where knives and pistols were used as well as fists, he was not caught altogether napping. The indolent shifting of the Englishman's weight had not been lost to his practised eye, so that when Sir James struck out, Rosenthal, although he had no time to evade the blow, slightly turned his head, with the result that what would otherwise have been a solid impact, glanced from the heavy bones under his woollen cap.

Seeing that he had failed, the Englishman sprang in and struck with his other fist, but this blow was knocked aside by Rosenthal's arm and the next instant the two had clinched.

Dallas, who fully understood his friend's nature, was quite prepared. As Sir James grappled with Rosenthal, Dallas sprang upon the Prince, and before that startled royalty could snatch his revolver from his pocket he received a blow between the eyes that sent him over backward and to the ground, his head striking the step as he fell. The *mécanicien*, taking it for granted, from the assurance of Rosenthal and the quiet demeanor of the two young men, that there would be no violence, was also taken unprepared. Before he could secure his spanner, Dallas had sprung upon him and struck him in the face with a force that sent him spinning in his tracks. But the American, although strong and quick, was light of build, while the chauffeur was a thick-set, powerful man. Recovering himself, he sprang at Dallas, and the two went to the ground together in a very active "rough-and-tumble."

The Prince, half-stunned from the rap which he had given his head as he fell, remained quite *hors de combat*, so that the fight was man to man. But Sir James, although a splendid athlete, was no match for the herculean Jew. Rosenthal tore him off as a gorilla might free himself from the clasp of a man, and, getting one great arm clear, smote the Englishman a hammer-like blow on the top of the head, which laid him senseless and quivering in the road. Then, ignoring the struggle going on between Dallas and the chauffeur, he flung open the door of the tonneau and, plucking out the Countess as if she were a child, carried her to the Prince's car and pushed her into the limousine.

"Keep quiet, Paula!" he panted. "Remember, if there is any alarm—Siberia!"

He strode back to Dallas's car. "Come, Thalia," said he. "Do not oblige me to use force. Come!"

Without a word, the girl descended from the car, but, catching sight of Sir James, she paused.



"You brute!" she cried chokingly. "Have you killed him?"

"Nonsense! It is nodding," panted the Jew. "He is yust asleep. I took care to hit him on top of the head and not too hard, or his skull would be c'e'crushed like an egg-shell! I do not like to kill a gentleman; they are too few! *Sapristi*, he *would* fight! Vat could I do? Come!"

He pushed the girl toward the other car, into which she crept without a word, when Rosenthal turned and secured the two valises. The chauffeur had overcome Dallas, who was lying on his back, cursing vigorously, while the man sat upon his chest, pinning both his wrists to the ground. The Prince had struggled to a sitting posture, with his back against the wheel, and was holding both hands to his head and groaning. As Rosenthal's eyes fell upon him, the Jew's face was lit for a moment by his sardonic grin. Leaning down, he raised the Prince bodily by both shoulders and thrust him into the limousine.

"Get in, my dear fellow," said he, and slammed the door. He turned to where Dallas was lying on his back in the road, under the weight of the burly *mécanicien*, and his deep chuckle rumbled out again.

"Vill you be good if you are let up, and not try to fight?" asked Rosenthal.

Dallas's reply was a somewhat torrid blast in the expressive terms of his native city, Chicago.

"*Peste!*" exclaimed the Jew. "All this fuss for some br'r'ight eyes! Such foolish boys! With me it is different; it is a matter of forty t'ousand pounds. Vy can you not be sensible?" His harsh voice carried a note that was almost plaintive. "Here we are fighting with r'r'rage in our hearts, and yesterday ve might have been all drowned together!"

Furious as he was, something in the tone of the big Jew struck Dallas's sense of the ridiculous. In spite of himself, he began to laugh. Rosenthal's harsh cackle joined him.

"That is better—to laugh! Come, get up!" He hauled the chauffeur roughly off Dallas, who rose to his feet, shook himself, eyed his big antagonist for a moment, then shrugged.

"Where is Sir James?" he demanded, looking around.

"Over there. He is hurted a little—not much." He jerked his head toward the Englishman, who was beginning to stir. Rosenthal turned away.

"Good night, Mr. Dallas," said he affably; then in French to the *mécanicien*: "Get in and drive."

Dallas walked stiffly to the side of his prostrate friend. The *mécanicien* climbed to his feet, cranked the motor, and took his seat. Rosenthal glanced at Sir James, then got in beside the chauffeur.

"Good night," called the Jew again.

"Good night," answered Dallas, in spite of himself.

The big car moved forward; as it gathered speed and glided off into the darkness, Dallas heard the Jew's harsh laugh, scarcely distinguishable from the clash of the pinions as the chauffeur went somewhat awkwardly into the speed ahead. With a wry smile, the young man turned to look at his friend. At the same moment Sir James sat upright.

"Ouch!" said he.

"How do you feel, James?" asked Dallas.

"Little groggy. I say——" His wits, scattered by the crushing force of Rosenthal's big fist, rallied quickly. He looked somewhat vacantly about him, then groaned.

"Very bad, James?"

"Oh, I say, Stephen!" Sir James's two hands were raised to clasp his head. "We've been had!"

"Could n't help it," muttered Dallas. "We did our little best."

"How did *you* make out?"

"Nothing to brag of. I did put the Prince out of action; then the chauffeur sat on me."

"The chauffeur! Oh, come! *Not* the chauffeur!"

"Rather it were he than the Prince—or even Rosenthal!" snapped Dallas.

"Oh, my soul! And our ladies?"

"They've got 'em."

"Oh, no! No! Stephen, Stephen, this is too awful!"

"Don't blame *me*," snapped Dallas. "You started the Donnybrook!"

"I know it. But—to get polished off and our ladies taken away from us by an outfit like that! Let me die!" Sir James groaned, then sat up with a feeble grin. "Did you say you had some brandy in the car?"

Dallas produced the stimulant, of which both partook.

"I thought I heard somebody laughing as I was waking up from my nap," observed Sir James.

"Very likely. Rosenthal was laughing, and so was I. Just think it over a bit, and perhaps the humor of the thing may strike *you*."

Sir James cackled feebly. "Downy old bird, Rosenthal," said he. "To think of his having foreseen the whole thing and drained all of the essence out of our tank except just enough to take us into the wilderness. Hope we meet again."

"I have an idea," said Dallas softly, "that we will."

"Where, pray?"

"That I don't know. But this adventure, James, has only just begun."

Sir James's face brightened. "I wish that I could think so," said he.

"Well, it's so. Let me tell you something. About two minutes before Rosenthal arrived on the scene, I had passed my word to Countess Rubitzki to see the two girls safely to Novibazar."

"The deuce you had!"

"Yes. I had agreed to get them safely away from Rosenthal and the Prince, and deposit them in the Lady Thalia's country, wherever that is. What I meant to do, of course, was to make a run to the eastward in the car, and, even while I was talking to her, I had figured it all out. My plan was to stop in Paris for a few hours' sleep and to get some things, and then, before Rosenthal and the Prince could arrive, to get away for Switzerland, go over the Simplon, and then on through Italy and the Dolomites for the Dalmatian coast, eventually escorting them across Montenegro, as we had planned. Now the whole thing has got complicated—but there's my promise just the same."

Sir James scrambled to his feet and seized his friend's hand.

"That's the talk, old fellow!" he exclaimed. "You can count on me. Besides"—he rubbed his head—"we can't decently drop the thing after being mauled about like this. And I say, Dallas, did you ever see such eyes?"

"No," said Dallas; "nor such a mouth and chin. And she is no more a nihilist at heart than I am. She has simply got mixed up in all this trouble through the fault of circumstance. She is the sweetest little person that ever lived! And so game! Upon my word, James, I caught a glimpse of her as that hairy brute was stuffing her into the limousine, and her cigarette was still going——"

"I say!" exclaimed Sir James. "You are talking about the Countess! I was referring to Thalia."

"Thalia!" exclaimed Dallas. "Oh, you can have Thalia."

"Wish I thought so! Anyhow, we'll have a try—eh?" Sir James raised the flask which he held in his hand. "It's a go, then, old boy! Here's confusion to Rosenthal and the Prince; and long live Thalia and the Countess and—and—what is the name of their bally country?"

"Novibazar."

"Long live Novibazar!"

The two friends drank.

"Here comes a wagon," said Dallas, as he set down the flask. He raised his voice. "Armand!"

"*Me voilà, M'sieu!*" came the distant answer.

"The question is," observed Sir James, the following day, as the two were at *déjeuner* in Dallas's luxurious apartment on the Avenue de l'Alma, "how to find 'em again."

"That should not be hard," said Dallas. "Rosenthal is too conspicuous a figure to lose himself in Paris."

"Look here," said Sir James, "tell you what I'll do. I know a South American woman here in Paris who is acquainted with all the unusual people. Her salon is usually full of Oriental nabobs and abdicating presidents and nihilists and shady Balkan royalties and that sort of truck. She is a Señora Gonzales, of Buenos Ayres. Got a card from her the other day. She comes back to town early to see something of the South American and West Indian gang before they go home for the winter. Suppose that I go around there to see if I can learn anything about our friends."

Dallas nodded.

"That is a good plan. Meanwhile, I will attend to a few matters, and we'll meet at the Traveller's for dinner."

"Right," said Sir James. "Then I'm off."

Returning to his studio, he gave orders to his man-servant to get ready to leave at a moment's notice, for a hunting trip in Austria. A few hours later he presented himself at a small private hotel upon the Avenue Henri Martin, where, on entering the salon, he was welcomed by a handsome woman of Andalusian type, who greeted him very cordially.

"It is so nice of you to come, Sir James," said she. "You are just in time. There is such a fascinating girl in the other room! She's Albanian; her father was Constantine Bey, and her home is high up in the north Albanian Alps."

"Not the Lady Thalia!" exclaimed Sir James.

"Yes," cried his hostess in surprise. "Do you know her?"

"Um—ah—we've met. Is the Prince Emilio with her?"

"The Prince is playing bridge."

"Indeed! And, speaking of the Prince, Señora Gonzales, do you happen to know a Baron Rosenthal?"

"Oh, everybody in South America knows Rosenthal. Such a *type*! He has promised to come in later."

"What do you know about him?" asked Sir James.

"Rosenthal is a Czechian Jew who has made an enormous fortune in promoting all kinds of—er—doubtful enterprises, principally revolutions, in all parts of the world. He knows everybody, speaks every language, after a fashion, and is a Papal baron. Fancy, a Jew a *Papal* baron!"

"Does that account for his being received?" asked Sir James. "I thought him an awful brute!"

His hostess threw out her hands. "But nobody could keep Rosenthal out of any place where he wanted to go!" she cried. "He is as insidious as the cholera, with the forward impetus of—of——"

"Of an auto-bus," suggested Sir James reflectively.

Madame Gonzales laughed. "I see that you have met him! But then," she added, "I doubt if anybody would wish to close the door to Rosenthal. He is very interesting, and would do anything for a person whom he liked. Then, he is really very decent and well behaved, and perfectly devoted to his wife."

Sir James was on the point of pursuing his inquiries when some other guests arrived, and the hostess turned from him with a smile.

He crossed the room and passed into a salon adjoining, where, sitting in an alcove and chatting with an immaculate young Frenchman, he discovered the Lady Thalia of Novibazar.

### PART III.

THE Lady Thalia looked up, and as her eyes fell upon Sir James they opened to their fullest width and the rich color faded from her cheeks. The next instant it came pouring back again, considerably deeper in tone, while her long lashes fell.

The man to whom she had been talking, and who was looking into her face at the time, observed the flash of emotion, and, swinging in his chair, glanced up curiously at Sir James. The two were slightly acquainted, having previously met at the same house. Sir James crossed the room in his usual calm and cheerful manner, bowed before the girl, then, with a pleasant word, turned to shake hands with the Frenchman.

"And how do you find yourself, Mademoiselle," said he in French, "after our little accident of last evening?" Without waiting for her reply, and in order to give her the cue, he turned to the Frenchman and continued: "While motoring last night with a friend, we had the misfortune to come in collision with the Prince Emilio and Baron Rosenthal."

"Indeed! And was there any damage?"

"None whatever to the cars," replied Sir James placidly. "The Prince, my friend, and myself were thrown about a little and slightly shaken up."

The lips of the Lady Thalia began to twitch, and the Frenchman, suspecting some understanding between the two, murmured his felicitations on their escape from serious injury, and, with a comment on the dangers of motoring, excused himself.

When he had gone the girl leaned back in her fauteuil and looked at Sir James smilingly.

"Awfully jolly, finding you here," said Sir James cheerfully. "Saves such a lot of trouble."

"Are you quite sure?" she answered.

"Positive. We had set ourselves to comb Paris to find you."

"And now that you have found us?" asked the girl.

"We can make our plans," answered Sir James, in his most matter-of-fact tone.

"Indeed!" The hazel eyes opened a little wider. "How is Mr. Dallas?"

"Quite furious. You see, the chauffeur sat on him."

"No!"

"Really! And I'm not quite sure that the brute did not cuff him once or twice. Stephen would not admit it, but I noticed that one ear was a trifle puffed up, and when he brushed his hair he swore."

The Lady Thalia leaned back in her chair and laughed until her eyes were misty. Then her lovely face grew serious.

"And how are *you*?" she asked. "I have been horribly anxious. When we left, you were quite unconscious."

"Merely a little nap," replied Sir James calmly. "The Baron knows his work. When I awoke, quite refreshed, I found Dallas raving with a thirst for revenge and a deep appreciation for the charms of a certain lady."

"And you?"

"Um—ah—my own emotions were not so complicated. I harbor no ill-will against Rosenthal."

The girl's eyes fell. "Paula is very fascinating, is she not?"

"So Stephen tells me. No doubt he is quite right."

The rich color deepened in the cheeks of the Lady Thalia, and her long lashes swept down to hide what was in the amber-colored eyes.

"But about our plans," said Sir James. "We have undertaken to get you out of the hands of the Prince and Rosenthal and land you safely in—ah——"

"Novibazar?"

"Quite so." Sir James adjusted his monocle, and, taking a small gold pencil from his pocket, scribbled something upon his cuff. The girl's lips twitched.

"We must give these chaps the slip," said Sir James. "Then we'll run you two ladies down through Switzerland and across to the Dalmatian coast. Get into your country by the back door, so to speak."

The girl's face became grave, and she shook her head.

"That is very dear and chivalrous of you," said she, "but it is quite impossible. We are leaving in two days for Belgrade, and Rosenthal has threatened to inform the police of Paula's identity if we try to run away in the meantime. It would not be safe."

Sir James knit his brows and spun his monocle around his finger.

"Besides," said the Lady Thalia slowly, "we could not think of letting you put yourself to so much trouble and expense."



"As for the trouble," said Sir James, "that does n't count, because, you see, we've neither of us a blessed thing to do, and as far as expense is concerned, Dallas swears that he would cheerfully put up forty thousand pounds against old Rosenthal's, just to get even. He's shockingly rich. What will happen when you get to Belgrade?"

The Lady Thalia's face clouded. "I have no idea," she answered. "To tell the truth, the thought is a little terrifying. Serbia is a very wild country, and Emilio has great influence there."

"You mean that he might do something nasty?"

"N'no. Rosenthal, who is kind-hearted in a way, would see that no actual harm happened us. But I think they are quite capable of keeping us somewhere under guard until they have either carried out their plans or——" The small white teeth came together.

"Or you have consented to marry Emilio?"

She nodded.

"In that case," said Sir James, "we will try to give them the slip at Belgrade. No, don't interrupt, please." The young man's pleasant voice had grown suddenly crisp, and his habitual indolent cheerfulness had disappeared. "You don't quite understand, Lady Thalia. The affair has ceased to be a lark, nor is it a matter of gallantry. Dallas and I have made a promise not only to you and Paula Rubitzki, but to ourselves. We have been knocked down and beaten and made fools of, and we cannot drop the undertaking now with honor. There is also, of course, the desire to be of service to you. Unless you forbid us, which I am sure you will not, we mean to see the thing through."

"It is dangerous work, Sir James. You do not understand what you are undertaking."

"I understand enough, and so does Dallas. Will you accept us as your knights-errant? Surely you will not refuse now, and go off and leave us disgraced."

"But you are not disgraced. Last night you were outnumbered; the odds were too heavy, and there are very few men, Sir James, who would care to attack a giant like Rosenthal. There is nothing for you to feel ashamed of, and, besides"—she slightly raised her chin—"I do not consider mere personal pride to be enough of a motive for what you wish to do."

"It is not the only motive. You see, Dallas and I are mere idlers. I paint bad pictures, and he plays with motors. We have often bewailed our lack of objective. Now, *you* are trying to do a very fine thing, and if you succeed in getting away from these two animals and out to your own country, you are going to try to prevent a border war and to bring your country under the control of a civilized administration. That is fine. It's splendid! If one could do some-

thing like that, one would not feel such an unpardonably useless member of society; so, you see, Stephen and I would like to help, if you don't mind."

The Lady Thalia smiled.

"You men are dears!" she said impulsively, in her soft, accented English. "Paula and I should consider ourselves very lucky to have found two such friends. Come, then, if you wish." She held out her hand.

Sir James took it quickly in his, and, with his brick-red face slightly brickier, leaned over and brushed it with his lips. At the same moment there came from the doorway behind him an explosive "*Sapristi!*" followed by a hoarse, gurgling chuckle. He turned in his chair, and looked up into the sardonically grinning face of Baron Isidor Rosenthal.

"*Mein Gott!*" cried the Jew. "You vas at it again!" He shook his great head, and his craggy, satanic features became suddenly grave. "My friend, this vill not do. The Prince is in the other r'rroom playing bridge; if he finds you here, there vill be a scene!" His brown eyes, shot with their multiple hazel dots, grew sombre. "I should have hitted you harder," he growled.

"Mr. Dallas," observed Sir James pleasantly, "should have hit the Prince harder. By rights, he ought to be in bed with his face in a towel."

"His face is not pretty," said the Jew, with a grin. "His eyes are very bad. We have told the people that ve vas in collision last night. But you must be careful, Sir Chames."

"Suppose you go in and keep him busy for a few minutes. I will not be long."

Rosenthal hesitated for an instant; then his diabolic grin pushed up the corners of his bushy eyebrows and bared his great, yellow fangs.

"Goot!" said he. "I vill do it—because you are a goot sport! I like you, and I t'ink perhaps I owe you somet'ing. But do not be long, Sir Chames. I vant to show some stones to Mademoiselle—a tiamond and ruby necklace I have yust bought for my dear vife in Buda-Pesth!" He turned and left the room.

Sir James and the Lady Thalia looked at each other and laughed.

"We must make our plans quickly," said the young man. "You say that you are going to leave for Belgrade the day after to-morrow?"

"The day after that—Thursday."

"Then Stephen and I will go on ahead of you as quickly as possible. We will take all our shooting things and give it out on our arrival that we are going up-country after moufflon or ibex or chamois or whatever they have out there, and we will travel under the names of

'Mr. James' and 'Mr. Stephen.' On arriving at Belgrade, we will try to secure an intelligent native servant, in whom we will confide as much as seems necessary. For the rest, we shall have to trust to opportunity. It ought not to be difficult—Serbia is such a wild country."

Again their eyes met. At the same moment there came from the other room a burst of laughter and many voices talking together, with the sound of chairs being pushed along the parquet.

"They have stopped playing," said the girl breathlessly. "You must go."

Sir James rose to his feet, then looked down at her with a smile.

"*A bientôt!*," said he softly. "At Belgrade, then."

He turned on his heel and strode out of the room. In the salon he came face to face with Rosenthal.

"You are going?" asked the Jew. "That is goot. The Prince is a hot-head."

"Is he? He did not act that way last night."

Rosenthal's yellow teeth shone between his mustache and his imperial.

"It is different in a salon," he said. "He has no polish, like you and me. He is a Serb—half civilized—*pouf!* Goot-by, Sir Chames."

The Englishman took the huge hand which a few hours earlier had landed closed and with crushing force upon his aristocratic head.

"Good-by, Baron Rosenthal," said he, smiling.

Three days later, in their suite of rooms, from the windows of which one looked out upon the palace where King Alexander and his queen Draga were murdered, Stephen Dallas, Sir James, and Connors, the latter's servant, sat calmly discussing their plans for the abduction of the Lady Thalia and her persecuted friend, Countess Paula Rubitzki.

Scattered in some confusion about the room were the arms and accoutrements of the sportsmen: costumes of canvas and khaki, puttee leggings, heavy, hobnailed hunting-shoes, cartridge-belts, camp gear of aluminum, flasks, high-powered binoculars, and weapons. With the last they had experienced no difficulty from the local authorities. One glance at Sir James's brick-red face, his monocle, and the faultless costumes of both men, had been sufficient passport; the official ones had not even been asked for. Sir James was so obviously the ubiquitous British sportsman, to be found wherever there are animals to kill, and there is no lack of game in the Servian highlands. Moreover, England is about the only one of the Powers held in esteem by the Servians, despite, or because of, the fact that only Great Britain withdrew her minister and kept him withdrawn after the bloodthirsty royal massacre which immediately preceded the accession of King Peter to the throne.

As Dallas and Sir James discussed their plans, the man Connors

was carefully studying a map which was spread on the central table, and as the two friends talked they occasionally glanced toward the Irishman, as if for confirmation of their statements. For Connors, when the truth were known, was far better qualified for the work in hand than either of the two, being a veteran campaigner with a large fund of personal experience where dealing with savage peoples was concerned. For many years he had served as the orderly of Sir James's father, the late Colonel Sir Henry Fenwick, and had been through one campaign in India and another in the Sudan. Connors was a silent man, past middle age, of an iron physique, resourceful, highly courageous, and possessed of a keen sense of Irish humor. In appearance he was of medium height, very broad, with a lean frame and large, heavy bones. He had, of course, been fully informed as to the nature of the enterprise, which, while it jumped entirely with his inclination, he nevertheless felt under obligation outwardly to condemn.

"There will be fightin', sorr," he had said to Dallas, "or I'm no judge. I see be the map that this same Novibazar do be a mountainous country, and 't is my expayrience that where there's mountains there do be paypul who wud rather fight than ate. An' fightin' is bad in these days phwin kings talks pace and their subjec's do be smugglin' long-range rifles into the hills agin the time phwin their naybors have laid down their arrums."

"But fighting is your proper trade, Connors," Dallas had said.

"Troth, sorr, and so it is, an' shud be Sir James's trade as well. But where there's wimmin mixed up wid it, sorr"—he shook his grizzled head—"fightin' is wan thing, sorr, an' wimmin is another, an' phwin the two is mixed 't is no great job a mon will be doin' at ayther—unless maybe 't is wid the wimmin."

Having thus expressed himself, the Irishman had set about to overhaul the weapons with a loving care which was scarcely consistent with his theoretic disapproval of the undertaking.

The proprietor of their inconspicuous hotel had promised to secure them a proper guide who should be familiar with the country and the local dialects of its inhabitants. As they were deep in the discussion of their plans, there came a rap at the door, and the German waiter—for the Serbs dislike menial work of any kind—ushered into their presence a swarthy-looking ruffian in a sheepskin cap, an upper garment of white which was half shirt, half smock, and white trousers, very full about the hips and fitting snugly about the legs, which were swathed in homespun stockings with a broad red band. On his feet he wore rawhide sandals, thonged across the instep and about the ankles. He was not a prepossessing-looking individual, but appeared to be clean, and his face, although sullen, showed an unmistakable intelligence.

Dallas looked up sharply, at which the man pulled off his sheep-skin cap.

"Goo' morning, sar," said he, with a grin.

"H'm," said Sir James. "So you speak English."

"Yes, sar. I American citizen."

"The deuce you are!" said Dallas.

"Yes, sar. I work three years in slaughter-house in New York City. I belong fiv' ward. Vote for Tammany. Get two dollars."

"What do you do here?" asked Sir James.

"Raise hogs in beech-woods over by head of Morava River."

"Do you know the country across the border in the *sanjak* of Novibazar?" asked Dallas. "The country in the neighborhood of Rascia?"

The man threw him a quick, cunning glance.

"Yes, sar; know all that country well. My landlord live there. He Prince Emilio. No good."

The two friends exchanged glances.

"What's the matter with him?" asked Dallas.

"He boss grafter. Sometime he make me pay rent twice. All his people very bad. Got bands of Bulgarian Christians. Don't do a thing but cut throats other Christians."

"Are you a Christian?" asked Dallas.

"Me? No. I good man. Been to New York. Out for the dough."

"The Christian community," observed Sir James, "does not appear to stand particularly high. I think this man is what we need. Suppose we tell him. What do you think, Connors?"

The Irishman had been eying the man keenly, and did not appear to be favorably impressed, but he shrugged his shoulders.

"No doubt he knows the counthry, sorr, an' he looks to be a smart divil enough."

"One's as good as another, James," said Dallas in French. "It's only a question of money, and we will pay him well. Besides, he does n't like Emilio."

Sir James nodded. "Suppose you tell him what we want, then," said he.

"What are you doing in Belgrade?" Dallas inquired.

"Jes' come down with bunch of hogs. Now they all shipped for Vienna. Pretty soon I go back."

"Did you ever hear of a place called Dakabar?" asked Dallas.

The man scratched his matted head.

"Yes, sar. That high up in the mountain. People there all Shkipetari. They tough gang. Don't like Serbs." His beady eyes fastened keenly on Dallas. "You goin' there?"

"Yes," said Dallas. "Now listen to me. The Prince Emilio will

be here in Belgrade to-morrow or next day. There are with him two ladies. We want to steal these two ladies and take them to Dakabar. Do you understand?"

The man looked at him keenly. His sullen face showed a quick flash of intelligence, then became dull again.

"That tough job."

"You will be well paid."

"How much you pay?"

"How much do you want?"

The man's eyes narrowed, and a crease appeared across his low forehead.

"This tough job," said he. "Suppose Prince, he get wise?" There was a significant gesture of his finger across his swarthy throat. "This job no cinch!"

"Then you are afraid to tackle it?" asked Dallas.

"No, sar, not afraid. Suppose you pay good price—one hundred dollars"—he looked keenly at Dallas with his cunning, beady eyes—"then I fix it."

"All right. I will pay you one hundred dollars; and when we get safely to Dakabar, if you have done will, I will give you another fifty. Now, what do you think is the best way to go about it?"

The man pondered.

"What's your name?"

"Dimitri, sar. I think best way for two ladies take a drive some night. I give coachman fifty *kroners* keep his mouth shut. Then we get ponies and wait on the big road to Nis. Then I know crossroad through the hills by Rudnik. That very long—four days, five days—but railroad not safe. Then I think ladies better wear boy clothes, so nobody get wise."

Dallas and Sir James exchanged glances.

"All right, Dimitri," said Dallas. "You appear to know your business. Go ahead, then, and buy your horses and the boys' clothes for the ladies, and mind you get clean, new ones. Until we get well away from Belgrade, we will push along pretty fast," he said to Sir James.

"S'pose you write note to ladies, sar," said Dimitri. "Tell 'em go driving one night very soon."

Dallas picked up his portfolio and wrote a few lines, which he enclosed in an envelope and handed to their guide.

"All right," said Dimitri. "This tough job. This no cinch, but I fix it."

High up on a little shelf of the wild Kapaonik Mountains the runaways had made their noonday halt at the cabin of a shaggy



swineherd, whose pigs were rooting in the beech-wood which clothed the flanks of the hill.

Above the cabin the mountain reared precipitously to a height of some six thousand feet. Beneath, the slope fell away more gradually to a narrow, thickly-wooded valley, where the tumbling waters of the Moravitzá foamed and roared and could be seen in places flashing like snow through vistas between the trees, the leaves of which were beginning to show a tint of autumn coloring.

The air was still and sweet, with the odors of moss and fern, for it had rained the night before, and the hot midday sun was now beating down to distil the steaming earth in its own fragrance. The soothing murmur of the river arose in pulsing beats to the ears of the travellers. Overhead the sky was clear and blue, and two eagles were weaving spirals as they mounted toward the zenith, calling to each other in clear and piercing notes.

Immediately around the cabin itself there was a little clearing which had been planted in maize; beyond this, the forest, which grew thickly on three sides, while on the fourth rose the bare, precipitous shoulder of the mountain.

Daintily perched on a block of wood, the Countess Rubitzki, attired in the costume of a Servian peasant boy, blew wreaths of smoke from her cigarette, and listened with a faint flush on her soft cheeks to some argument advanced by Dallas, who, with his back against a log, was basking luxuriously in the sunshine.

At a little distance, Sir James, in tweeds and puttees, was mixing some water with the strong native red wine for the refreshment of the Lady Thalia. She was clad like the Countess, in a long smock of homespun wool, caught about the waist with a belt, and falling in a kilt which reached mid-thigh; full trousers of the same material, and heavy woollen stockings, with rawhide sandals laced across the ankle and half way up the leg. Both girls might easily have passed as young European lads who, for comfort and convenience, had adopted the native costume. Their abundant hair was entirely hidden by their *kalpaks*, or round caps fitting low on the head and supplemented by scarfs twisted turban-like, as though to protect the back of the head against the rays of the sun.

For three and a half days they had pushed on rapidly, journeying through a wild and beautiful country, sparsely populated, and, for the greater part, forest-covered. The abduction had been skilfully managed by Dimitri, and had been unmarred by the slightest hitch. Returning from a banquet at the palace, their well-bribed coachman had driven to a lonely spot on the outskirts of the city, where their two cavaliers were awaiting them. The night being fine, they had put some thirty miles between themselves and Belgrade before the sunrise, when they had

stopped to rest at the lonely farm-house of a plum-grower. Since then they had travelled throughout the day, and stopped for the night wherever a shelter presented itself.

"To-morrow," said Sir James, "we ought to get a glimpse of your hills, Thalia. 'Pon my word, I'll be rather sorry when we do! This has been no end of a lark."

The girl looked at him thoughtfully; then her eyes flitted across to where Dallas was sitting, and a faint shadow crossed her lovely face.

"I shall be sorry, too," she answered in a low voice.

"What will you do when you get there?" asked Sir James.

"I will call together the chiefs and explain to them what Emilio wants to do, and try to show them the necessity of keeping the peace. We Shkipetari are composed of different clans, a good deal like the Scotch Highlanders, Sir James. Although most of my people are Mohammedans, they are quite unlike the Turks, whom they hate. My father was a Bey, and had a great deal of authority; he was once called to Constantinople by the Sultan, who did him a great deal of honor and persuaded him to do what he could to stop the incessant fighting and the attacks that were always being made on the Turkish *caracols*, or outposts. I think that they will listen to me and try to keep their people quiet. My father was killed by a band of Christians of the Bulgarian Church, and ever since there has been a blood feud with the Serbs of Emilio's district."

"I fancy your people are a pretty bloodthirsty crowd," observed Sir James.

"They are savage," Thalia admitted, "but they are straightforward and chivalrous, not treacherous, like the Serbs. A woman could go anywhere alone through our hills with perfect safety, and so could a traveller whom they had nothing against. But there is no such thing as law and order, and"—she smiled—"we settle our disputes in our own way. Nobody ever tries to interfere with the Shkipetari."

Sir James laughed, and, stretching his long limbs luxuriously in the warm sunshine, lit a cigarette. Their luncheon had been a hearty one, as the day before Dallas, a splendid shot, had killed a red deer far across a rocky gorge through which their trail had wound. Dimitri's beady eyes had narrowed at sight of the buck tumbling down the bare hillside, and the expression of the guide's face had not been lost on Connors.

"'T was not the look a mon would wear, sorrs, at sight of meat in camp," said the Irishman later to Sir James and Dallas. "He will stand a lot of watchin', this Dimitri. I cud see the workin's o' the scallywag's brain as plain as ye see the innerds of a glass travellin' clock. Thinks he, 'I'll take good care that niver ye get the chance to draw a bead on me!'"

Connors was unpacking a few delicacies when Sir James saw him stop in the act of unbuckling a strap, and, shading his eyes with his hand, stare up at a ledge which almost overhung the cabin.

"What do you see, Connors?" he called.

The Irishman turned.

"There's three chamois, sorr, wan a buck, just passed around that ledge of rock beyant."

Dallas, a keen sportsman, sprang to his feet. "Do you think I could get a shot?" he asked.

"Yis, sorr, but 't is a bit of a climb."

Dallas quickly entered the cabin, to emerge a moment later with his .30-40. "I'm going to have a try for the buck," said he.

"May I go with you?" asked Thalia, rising.

Dallas glanced dubiously at the almost sheer face of the mountain.

"It's a rough climb."

"I'm a hill woman."

"All right; come ahead, then."

Dimitri, hearing their voices, had come to the door of the hut and was looking at Dallas through narrowed lids.

"Better not to go, sar," said he. "We start now pretty quick."

Dallas glanced at him in surprise. "Thought you said we should n't leave for another hour," said he.

"That pass very quick when you chase goats."

"I'll be back," said Dallas shortly, and had turned toward the mountain when Dimitri spoke again.

"Better stay here, sar," said he. "This fella"—he pointed at the goat-herd, who was giving some fodder to the horses—"he tell me we better start right away, to get across those hills before dark. Road very bad; straight up and straight down."

"All right," said Dallas indifferently. "I will be back by the time that you are ready to start."

He turned away, and Dimitri scowled and went back into the hut.

"Come on, Thalia," said Dallas, "if you really want to go, but it's going to be a hard climb."

The girl glanced at him and smiled. Throughout their journey there had been in her manner toward Dallas a hint of mockery which had rather puzzled the young man, who had gradually come to the conclusion that the Albanian lady was inclined to regard him as a somewhat effete production of over-civilization.

They started to climb in silence. For the first hundred feet the ascent presented no especial difficulties, but a little higher up they found themselves confronted by sheer cliff, seamed and eroded, and, although quite surmountable to the experienced mountaineer, yet dangerous from its steepness.

Dallas glanced up in some dismay.

"This job is not so easy as it looks from down below," said he.  
"You'd better not tackle it, Thalia."

She glanced into his flushed face with her mocking little smile.

"Are you quite sure that you had better tackle it yourself?"

"I am not crazy about it—with this rifle," he admitted.

"Then give the rifle to me."

"What nonsense!"

"Then come ahead. I'll go first and pick out our route." She glanced at him over her shoulder and smiled again. "You see, Mr. Dallas, this is my country. Have you a steady head?"

"Fairly. If I get frightened, you can come back and carry me up."

Something in the dry tone brought a quick flush to the girl's cheek and a little sparkle in her eyes. Without answering, she turned and started to pick her way up the rough side of the cliff. Dallas, pausing to sling the rifle across his back, followed her.

For about a hundred feet they worked their way up from ledge to ledge. Then came a stretch of turf, firm but so steep that a fall would have meant rolling down over the brink and death on the ragged rocks beneath. A hundred feet up this almost precipitous bank, Thalia paused, and, standing beautifully poised, looked back at Dallas, who was working his way gingerly up on all-fours.

"Better not look back," snapped the young man. "And I say, Thalia, *don't* stand up like that. It makes me rather sick to look at you!" He glanced back over his shoulder, then rested, digging his toes into the turf and flattening his body against the almost vertical incline. "My word! This is worse than sheer rock."

Thalia glanced at him sharply, and the smile left her lips.

"Give me the rifle," said she.

"Don't be silly."

"No, I insist. This is only dangerous if one gets giddy, and heights have absolutely no effect on me. Come, slip it off."

"Thalia, don't lean forward like that!" Dallas dug his fingers into the soft mould. "Hang it, it's worse to watch you than it is to climb the bally thing! Come on, let's go up."

She threw him a quick, anxious look, then turned and began to climb rapidly upward. On a narrow ledge of less than a yard in width she stopped and waited for Dallas to join her.

"There are only about fifty feet more," said the girl, "and then it will be easier. But the next fifty feet are rather sheer; will you not give me the rifle?"

"Look here, Thalia," said Dallas, "if you keep on bothering me about this confounded rifle, I'll throw it over the edge of the precipice."

"Better that than to risk a fall."

"I don't intend to fall. But it's some time since I've done any climbing, and my head is n't quite as steady as it might be."

"Then I insist on your giving me the rifle."

"Stop it!" growled Dallas. "Come on, let's get it over with."

Without answering, the girl started to work her way up a narrow fissure on the face of the cliff. A little higher, the seam widened into what is known to Alpinists as a "chimney." Nearly at the top, Thalia, who was in the act of swinging her lithe body over the rim of a broad shelf, heard a gasp, and, poised as she was, glanced back into Dallas's pale, upturned face. While he was reaching up to grip a spur of rock which offered a safe hand-hold, the stock of the rifle had struck the face of the cliff in such a way as to upset his balance, for the moment insecure. As a result, he had pitched sideways, and only saved himself from falling by throwing his outside foot across to the opposite wall of the "chimney," so that he stopped for the moment wedged in something of the position of a circus performer riding two horses, with one foot on the back of either. Beneath him, the "chimney" widened so that if he had slipped down a few inches his purchase would have been lost, and he would have fallen to the ledge, and thence to the jagged rocks a hundred feet or more beneath.

As Thalia glanced down, her practised eye saw the danger, which was for the moment extreme. Swinging herself face downward across the ledge, she gripped the shoulder of Dallas's loose khaki coat. Although unable to hold his weight, she could nevertheless take a good deal of it, and, what was more important, shift it to the side of the foot which was well planted. Dallas, feeling the other foot beginning to slip on the face of the rock, and realizing the danger of his position, knew instinctively that if he fell he would drag the girl after him. He turned his blanched face up to hers.

"Let go!" he gasped. "I'm all right!"

Thalia's own face was like chalk.

"Kick yourself back to the ledge!" she panted. "Quick!"

Dallas's hand as well as his foot was braced against the outer wall; the fingers of his other hand were hooked in a little crevice.

"I'd lose my balance."

"No, you won't! Do as I say." Thalia spoke through her clenched teeth.

"All right, here goes."

Putting out all his strength, Dallas thrust himself violently back against the face of the cliff. As he did so, Thalia swung his body with all her force in the same direction, and for a moment held him barely balanced against the sheer side of the rock. But Dallas felt that he could not keep his position.

"Let go!" he gasped.

"Now reach up and grab that knob of rock with your free hand."

"Don't dare!"

"Do as I say!"

Like a man in a nightmare, he swung his arm upward; for a moment he hung poised, on the verge of falling; then his fingers closed on the projection, and for the moment he was safe.

"Now climb up," said Thalia. "Slowly."

With his heart in his mouth, Dallas slowly raised himself to the rim of the ledge, then over it, and a moment later was lying face downward on the rock.

For a few seconds he neither moved nor spoke. Then he turned his haggard, colorless face toward the girl. Thalia's breath was coming quickly, her cheeks were like chalk, and her eyes dark and luminous.

"That was a close squeak," said Dallas.

She nodded. Dallas raised himself and crawled back from the brink.

"Thalia," said he, "if I had fallen, you'd have come, too."

"I should have wanted to."

Dallas held out his hand, and Thalia dropped hers into it. Their eyes met for a moment; then those of the girl looked away.

"We are all right now," said she. "The rest is easy."

Dallas did not answer, and for a moment the two sat side by side in silence. Then Thalia, who had been looking down upon the cabin far beneath, uttered a little exclamation.

"What is it?" asked Dallas.

"Those people." She pointed downward.

Staring in the direction indicated, Dallas saw a company of men ascending the trail which led to the hut. There appeared to be about a dozen, all of whom were carrying guns. As far as he could see, for the distance was considerable, the men were dressed like the shepherds and swineherds which they had met from time to time.

"What are they?" he asked.

Thalia shook her head.

"I don't like it," muttered Dallas.

"Nor I."

He glanced at her quickly. "Brigands?"

"Look!" cried the girl. "There! Behind the hut! What is Dimitri doing?"

In the rear of the cabin they could see the guide apparently pawing at something under the edge of the wall. As they watched, puzzled and disturbed, the man hauled a gun from underneath the cabin. Laying the weapon aside, he reached in again and hauled out another, then a third and a fourth. And then suddenly Dallas understood.



"It's a trap!" he snarled, turning his pale face to Thalia. "The swine is stealing the rifles! You see? He knocked a hole in the mud wall and shoved the guns through, then went around behind so as not to be seen. It's a put-up job, Thalia! He's been waiting for that gang down below."

As he spoke, the Serb gathered up the four guns and stood for a moment as if listening. Dallas quickly unslung his rifle and flung himself face downward on the edge of the cliff.

"What!" cried Thalia breathlessly. "You are going to—to——"

Her voice failed her. But Dallas was measuring the range with a cold, practised eye.

"Seven hundred—eight hundred—but it's a drop," he muttered, fingering the sight of the beautiful weapon.

Thalia clasped her hands over her mouth. Her light hazel eyes had grown suddenly black.

Down below, the treacherous Serb had turned and was stealing away. In front of the cabin, Sir James and Paula were standing side by side, apparently looking up toward the ledge. Connors was not in sight. The company of men coming up the trail had stopped under the brow of the hill and appeared to be waiting.

Lying face downward, Dallas cuddled the stock of his rifle under his chin. Thalia, her hands still clasped over her mouth, was watching Dimitri, who presently paused again and looked back.

Dallas was as rigid as the rocks beneath him. The long, thin, blue-black rifle-barrel had lost its slight oscillation and was motionless as he.

Then all at once there leaped from the muzzle a pale blue jet; there was a sharp report, which was the next instant rolled out from the sheer side of the mountain in echoing reverberations. Dallas jerked his head quickly to the side, while as if by instinct his hand went to the lever and threw a fresh cartridge into the chamber.

But there was no need. Far below, the small, crouching figure of Dimitri lurched suddenly forward, his arms flew out, and the rifles went scattering in all directions. The body straightened, and a faint yell was wafted up in thin and tremulous tones. Then the guide's figure swayed, tottered, and fell upon the ground, where it lay motionless.

#### PART IV.

THALIA stifled a little scream, then, "Well shot!" she cried with spirit.

Still lying on his face, with the muzzle of his rifle projecting over the edge of the cliff, Dallas turned to her a white face in which his gray eyes shone like two pieces of jade.

"Thanks. It *wasn't* so bad, considering the range—eh?"

But Thalia was looking down upon the cabin, far beneath.

"Look!" she cried.

At the sound of the rifle-shot, Connors had come quickly out of the hut; then, as Dimitri's death-scream rang out, he and Sir James had rushed into the hut, as Dallas guessed, to secure their weapons. An instant later they emerged, passed around the cabin, and when Thalia spoke they were leaning over the body of the Serb. Presently Connors rolled it on its back in a manner which showed Dallas that the guide was quite dead; then the Irishman looked up toward the mountain-side and waved his hat, as if in acknowledgment of the success of Dallas's long shot.

"You killed!" said Thalia between her teeth.

"That was my object. He deserved it, don't you think?"

The girl threw him a quick, curious look.

"Did you ever kill a man before?"

"No. But it looks as if I might have to kill a few more pretty soon. See there!" He waved his rifle toward the cabin. The wild-looking band of armed men had passed around the edge of the clearing and come in sight of the hut. Sir James had returned to Paula, and Connors, who had gathered up the rifles dropped by the Serb, was standing by the cabin door, apparently loading them. Suddenly Sir James turned and stared at the band, which was distant about a hundred yards, then, preceded by Paula, walked to the hut and entered.

"Ah!" muttered Dallas, "they see them. Wish we were down there. What do you think they are, Thalia? Brigands?" He looked up at the girl, who nodded. They were both rather pale, and Thalia's eyes had darkened.

"Yes," she answered; "brigands for the time being, probably recruited by Dimitri to rob us and perhaps hold us for ransom. It was arranged, no doubt, between him and the herder at the cabin of whom we stopped last night. See"—she pointed downward; "the swineherd is talking to them, and they are looking up here."

"They will be hunting us directly," growled Dallas, "and I've only four rounds left. What rotten luck, to have been up here just when that gang arrived! But if we had been down there, the chances are that Dimitri would have got away with the guns," he added thoughtfully.

"We are much better here than there," said Thalia. "Those other people are trapped; but they are two good fighting men, and have rifles and plenty of ammunition, and there is venison and water and wine and other food in the hut. They can stand three days' siege, and by that time we can rescue them."

"We can!"

"Yes. Don't you see what we have got to do? We are just on the

edge of my country; it is only the other side of those hills." She motioned across the valley. "Two days' journey on foot, and we shall begin to fall in with the Shkipetari. The first Albanian we meet will raise his clan in no time when I tell him who I am, and we will come back here and feed that carrion"—she tossed her head toward the herders—"to the jackals."

Dallas glanced at her quickly. The girl's voice carried a fierce little ring, there was a bright red spot in either cheek, and her eyes were aflame. For the first time the young man realized that the girl beside him was herself pure Albanian, a native of the wild mountain fastnesses which had been the scene of so many sanguinary feuds, and that she herself possessed no very thick veneer of what is generally understood as civilization. But he cast his eyes in the direction of the wild country which intervened and shook his head doubtfully.

"Do you think that we could do it?" he asked.

"We have got to!"

"But first we must get past these people; then we would not dare to take the road, but would have to go 'cross-country, and we have no food, nor shelter—not even a blanket. Where could you sleep?"

"On the ground. We can build a fire. What else is there to do?"

"Give ourselves up," said Dallas, "if it is only the question of a ransom."

Thalia's mouth grew scornful.

"You may if you like," she answered. "I shall try for Dakabar!"

Dallas turned to her a slightly reddened face. "It is for the safety of you girls, of course," he said. "This is my expedition, and I will stand any incidental expenses—such as a few thousand pounds' ransom. I should far rather do that than to expose you to danger and hardship."

Thalia's face softened. She stooped and patted Dallas's shoulder as he lay half sprawled on one hip, his rifle under him.

"You are a dear," said she. "But my plan is not so difficult. We can slip past those men in the beech-woods on the other side of this mountain. And you still have four shots! The others can hold out. Oh, look! Look down there, Dallas!"

The herders were advancing in a body toward the hut. When they were within fifty yards of the door, Sir James stepped out, rifle in hand, and waved them back. They halted, and there appeared to be some sort of discussion going on, the hillmen, from their gestures, apparently asserting their friendly intentions, while the Englishman made from time to time the backward motion with his rifle-barrel.

Then all at once the palaver came to a sudden and startling end.

There was a commotion among the herders; Sir James sprang quickly back into the hut. Sudden jets of blue-white smoke leaped out from the clustered hillmen, and a moment later the crash of a scattering volley came up in multiple reverberations.

"The murderous swine!" snarled Dallas, instinctively shoving out his .30-40. But Thalia, crouching beside him, laid her hand quickly on his arm.

"Save your shots," said she. "We may need them."

"That's so." He lowered the rifle and looked at her over his shoulder. "Hope nobody got hit. That shack is built of stones and mud, and ought to stop bullets. Ah!"

The hillmen had opened their ranks, and were approaching the cabin, when two thin puffs of smoke leaped apparently from the solid wall. A faint yell quavered up from beneath. One of the herders pitched forward on his face, while another reeled backward and fell across a pile of stones. Again came the fatal spurts of smoke from the cabin, and another hillman was down and crawling away on all-fours. The herders scattered swiftly, flying for shelter in all directions, while the air was filled with the rumbling reverberations thrown back from one side of the valley to the other.

Dallas turned a pale but exultant face toward Thalia.

"Fine! Oh, fine!" he cried, and clapped his thigh. "They've knocked loop-holes in all four walls! Gad! There are three of the beggars out of the running, Thalia! How many more were there in the gang? A dozen, perhaps?"

"More than that. But, Dallas, we must go."

"Then you want to try for Dakabar?"

"What else is there to do? Those animals mean murder and loot! And we have no time to spare. They know that we are up here."

He nodded and swung himself to his feet.

"Yes; they will be stalking us presently. The war is on now. We will try to get around into the woods on the other side of the mountain, then work down to the river. Do you think we can get across?"

"We must—even if we have to swim for it."

Dallas did not answer, but led the way along the little shelf, which presently broadened into a sort of grassy terrace, almost a mountain pasture. Crossing this, they came upon a steep, boulder-strewn slope which a quarter of a mile below was met by a heavy growth of beech-woods extending all the way down into the valley. Far below they could hear the roar of the Moravitz.

Down the rocky slope they plunged as fast as safety would permit, then presently the forest closed in about them: splendid beeches and

oaks, with here and there scattering conifers, pines, and firs. There was very little underbrush, and their eyes were kept alert for any sign of the enemy.

Both were beginning to think that they would reach the river unmolested when from close at hand upon their right there came a loud report and a bullet hummed past their heads.

"Jump behind a tree!" cried Dallas.

Five paces to their left a big beech reared its sheltering trunk, and under the cover of this they slipped like Indians. About a hundred yards away a blue cloud of smoke was dissipating in the thick foliage overhead.

"He's behind that oak!" whispered Dallas. "Crouch down, Thalia; I'll shoot over your head if I get sight of him."

For a moment they waited; then Dallas muttered, "Stop here; I'll run him out."

It had crossed his mind that their enemy was probably armed with a muzzle-loader; also that they had little time to lose. Between them and the oak about which the smoke was swirling there were several big trees, and, leaving his shelter, Dallas ran for the cover of the nearest. Just as he reached it he caught a glimpse of a dark figure running back into the woods. Dallas sprang clear of his tree, threw up his rifle, took a quick shot at a range of not more than fifty yards, and saw the man plunge head foremost into a clump of bushes which looked like laurel.

"Got him!" he called to Thalia. "Come on!"

Together they ran on down the wooded slope. A little lower they encountered a thick growth of scrub, into which they slipped like hares, plunging through thorns and brambles, from which they finally emerged upon the bank of the river.

"Listen," said Thalia, as they crouched in the dense willow-growth that fringed the shore.

Not far behind them there had broken out a clamor of savage yells, which were answered faintly from higher up the mountains.

"They are coming!" panted Dallas. "We can't stop here. Let's try to get across."

They had struck the river at one of its still reaches, and as the autumn rains had not yet begun, the stream was low, with pebbly bars and broad standing pools. Close to the opposite bank, however, they could see a narrow channel of swift, dark water, which a little farther down-stream was hidden from sight by what would have been when the river was high a long, narrow island, thickly covered with bushes and a growth of willows. Dallas pointed toward it with his rifle-barrel.

"Let's get over there," he said. "It seems to be a good cover, and

we can cross on the other side without being seen. That is, if we can cross."

Pushing their way through the bushes, they came out upon the shingly river-bed, where for a hundred yards they were exposed to great danger of being seen. But their enemies were apparently higher up in the woods, and they reached the island undiscovered and crawled into the scrub, where they sank down for a moment to rest and breathe.

"Looks deep on the other side," said Dallas.

"We can wade it, I think."

"Hope so."

"Can't you swim?"

"I'd rather smoke. Besides, here's the rifle."

"Give that to me."

"Look here, Thalia, you leave that rifle alone. I'm a good deal of a duffer, I know, but I have n't reached the stage where I must have my gun carried up cliffs and across rivers for me by a girl."

"You are a little new to climbing," said Thalia, "and you may not be much of a swimmer; but you can shoot!" She rose to her feet. "Wait here; I want to see how deep it is."

Dallas waited, closely watching the opposite bank. A moment later Thalia returned.

"We can wade it," she said. "The water is not more than waist-deep, and the current is less swift than it looks. What is the matter?" For Dallas's face was very grave.

"I was thinking," said he, "that it's a pretty serious matter to have to lie out in the woods soaking wet. There is frost almost every night up here."

Thalia smiled; then the color poured into her face.

"We can take them off," said she.

"What!" Dallas turned to her so shocked and startled a face that she burst into a laugh.

"Don't look so scandalized, Dallas! You can stop here until you hear me whistle. Then I will go up into the bushes and you can come over. There's no Mrs. Grundy in the Kapoanik Mountains."

Dallas laughed. "My word, Thalia, but you are a good little sport! Go ahead, then, because we have n't any time to lose."

For a moment their eyes met. Thalia's cheeks were very red and her lips like coral. Thorn and brier had left their cruel marks across her flushed, lovely face; the scarf of her *kalpak* was gone, and stray wisps of her bronze-black hair had escaped from under the rim of her cap and were curling about her delicate ears. As Dallas looked at her, his face was lit by a sudden glow of admiration, and at the expression in his habitually cynical eyes Thalia first looked questioning, then turned away with a deeper flush.



"Gad! But you're a wonder!" said Dallas. "You look as if you actually liked it all."

"I should not mind—if it were not for the others."

"It is James that should be here," said Dallas, "instead of me."

She slightly raised her chin. "And you ought to be with Paula."

"Had I? But run along, Thalia; we've got no time to lose."

She turned and slipped into the bushes, and a few moments later Dallas heard the clinking of pebbles behind him, for the little island, although perhaps fifty yards in length, was not more than four or five in width. He was reflecting on the gravity of the situation, and keeping a keen watch upon the opposite bank of the river, when from almost the very spot where he and Thalia had come out, there emerged three of the hillmen.

Dallas's grip on his rifle tightened instinctively. The three men stood for a moment looking up and down the stream, then across in his direction. As they were a little above the head of the island, it suddenly occurred to Dallas that from where they stood it might be possible to see Thalia when she reached the opposite bank. He climbed to his feet, and, crouching low, pushed his way through the dense bushes to the edge of the channel. Half way over, Thalia was wading bosom-deep in the clear, icy water. Her clothes, wrapped into a snug bundle, were held poised upon her head by one round, gleaming arm. Although the current was not swift, the girl was having a hard time to keep her footing, as Dallas could see from the unsteady movements of her head and shoulders and the oscillations of her free arm in the water. She wore a single white undergarment, which was apparently impeding her balance, for she paused occasionally as if to disentangle herself from its folds.

Dallas whistled softly, and she looked back over her shoulder, when he made a sweeping gesture down-stream, then pointed toward the bank which they had left. Thalia threw up her free arm in answer. Dallas turned and crept back to his ambush.

The three hillmen had separated and were walking out across the cobbly river-bottom. Suddenly the one farthest up-stream paused and pointed to the ground. The others joined him, and for a moment all three studied the cobbles attentively. It was evident to Dallas that they had found the trail, for they looked toward the little island and half raised their weapons, then proceeded warily in his direction.

"There is nothing for it," he thought grimly, "but to pot all three."

He raised his rifle and covered the man to the right. But for some reason he found himself unable to pull the trigger.

"I'm a fool," he thought, and, rising to his feet, strode out upon the edge of the bar.

The herders saw him instantly and stopped in their tracks. Dallas motioned them back. The men did not move. Dallas repeated his gesture. Two of the herders fell back a pace; then the man on the left threw his gun quickly to his shoulder and fired. Dallas staggered back with a sense of sharp, violent pain. There was a stabbing through his chest and a burning sensation on the side of his head and through his left forearm.

With a little snarl of rage, he dropped on one knee, threw his rifle to his shoulder, and, sighting on the man who had fired, pulled the trigger. The fellow screamed, flung out his arms, and went over backward. The soft-nosed hunting-bullet had struck him fairly in the chest, mushroomed, and torn its way through, killing him instantly.

One of his companions turned and fled back toward the bank. The other raised his weapon and fired, then wheeled about and followed him. Dallas, pulling himself together with an effort, fired again, but missed. Quite by instinct, he threw his last cartridge into the chamber, and, setting his teeth, for the pain in his arm was intense, got the man's back fairly before the sights and fired again. This time the bullet found its mark, and the man went down, his weapon clattering among the stones.

Sick and giddy, Dallas turned and crept back into the bushes, where he sank to the ground. The blood was streaming down the side of his face, and his left arm felt numb and powerless. There was a burning pain on the right side of his chest. He pulled up his flannel hunting-shirt and discovered a small hole from which the blood was trickling in crimson drops. But a spot on the outer edge of his right shoulder-blade was giving him intense pain, and, placing his left hand over it, he felt a small, hard object just beneath the skin.

"Guess I'm rather badly hit," he thought, "but I must get across before I get any weaker."

Laying down the rifle, now useless for lack of ammunition, he staggered through the bushes and into the icy water. Directly opposite stood Thalia, clad in a long white garment which fell from her shoulders to her knees.

"Are you hit?" she cried tremulously.

"Yes," he answered, and waded out into the stream.

Half way across, the water deepened suddenly; an eddy of the current caught him and swept him off his feet. Down he went, but came up to find a fresh footing. The trees on the opposite bank were blurred and misty, and he seemed to be drifting with the current. All at once the river-bottom dropped from under his feet. Acting by instinct, he struck out feebly. Then there came a roaring in his ears and green, swirling lights before his eyes, but he struggled to

the surface, and as he did so saw Thalia's face close beside his own and felt a strong grasp on his shoulder. The bottom seemed to rise up under his feet again, and he tottered up the bank, to sink down helplessly upon the sun-warmed pebbles.

Thalia was kneeling beside him, her face drawn and white and tense.

"You are badly hurt?" she cried.

"Don't think so," muttered Dallas. "Go and dress." He struggled to sit up, but Thalia flung one arm across his chest and drew him back until his head rested on her knee, where it lay with a little stream of blood trickling down from his forehead.

The girl's swift fingers explored the wound. From the side of the forehead to the temple the scalp was ploughed open. Thalia gave a sigh of relief.

"It glanced off."

"Yes," muttered Dallas; "the brute peppered me with buck-shot."

"Where else are you hit?"

"In the forearm; and there's a slug somewhere in my chest. But I'm feeling better now. Go and dress, Thalia."

But Thalia was examining the forearm. Apparently the bullet was embedded somewhere in the muscles, as there was no wound of exit.

"Where else? In the chest?" She drew up the woollen shirt, and at sight of the small, sinister-looking bullet-hole, gave a little gasp.

"It does n't hurt," said Dallas. "I don't think it went through. Probably hit a rib and went around, because I felt it over here on the side. What nasty brutes!—to sprinkle you with buck-shot!"

"Are you in much pain?"

"No, I'm not in any pain. That cold water made 'em all numb. But you go and dress! Do you hear me? *Go and dress!* You will catch cold!"

Thalia rose slowly to her feet, and stood contemplating him with an utter disregard for the scantiness of her attire, which had in it something primitively heroic. Her expressive face was knit in lines of anxious thought.

"Can you get up the bank and into the bushes?" she asked.

"Yes, of course. I'm not badly hurt. It was only the first shock that knocked me out."

"But that wound in your chest?"

"Don't believe it went in. There would be blood in my mouth if it had. Probably followed the rib around, or it would not be there just under the skin." He clambered to his feet and stood for a minute, as if gauging his strength. Seeing the pallor of his face, Thalia stepped to his side and passed her round, bare arm under his.

"Lean on me," she said.

Steadied by the girl, he walked up the short, pebbly beach and pushed his way into the willows, where he half fell, half sank, to the ground, his head swimming and his vision vague and misty. Thalia, startled at his pallor, leaned over him.

"Lie down," said she. "You're still faint."

Distressed more by his faintness than by the pain of his wounds, Dallas closed his eyes and let his head fall backward. He was dimly conscious that it was being gently supported; then it seemed to him that he heard a sound of tearing cloth. A moment later his head began to clear again, and he opened his eyes and looked up under the brim of a bandage bound snugly across his forehead, and into the face of Thalia, who was bending anxiously over him.

"What's this thing?" He raised his hand to his head.

"A bandage, my dear."

"Where did you get it?"

"At the chemist's around the corner."

Dallas raised himself till he sat upright. He looked at Thalia, who was sitting cross-legged, an anxious smile on her lips and her wet garment hanging limply from her shoulders.

"I thought I told you to go and dress," said Dallas sternly. "Now go! I shall not speak to you again until you get your clothes on."

He turned his back upon the girl, and sat for a few minutes trying hard to fight off his light-headedness. A little time elapsed; then the bushes behind him rustled, and he looked over his shoulder to see Thalia, a Servian peasant boy again. She looked at him inquiringly.

"I feel quite fit now," said he. "But, Thalia, we are in a bad fix."

She nodded, her lovely face very grave.

"There is only one thing for us to do, Dallas. I have found a little path which must lead up to a house not far above us, because I followed it for a few steps and came upon a spring, all stoned in, with foot-prints in the ground about it. We must go up and take our chances."

"You think it's safe?"

"There's no choice. You are wounded and soaking wet, and must have shelter. Besides, hospitality is a very sacred thing all through these mountains—all over the Balkans, in fact. Perhaps I can talk to the people and make them understand that it would be to their profit to treat us well. Can you walk a little distance?"

"Oh, yes; I'm all right now. You are right, Thalia; we've got to have shelter."

Pushing their way through the bushes, they came presently upon a little foot-path which wound up through a pine grove to come out

a short distance beyond upon a small plateau covered with splendid oaks. The spot was charmingly picturesque: one hundred feet below them flowed the Moravitz; on three sides of the plateau the land fell away steeply, and on the fourth rose the precipitous side of the mountain. There was no underbrush, and through the vistas between the big tree-trunks they could see far down the valley and catch glimpses of the distant hills bathed in the brilliant yellow sunlight of the late afternoon.

"There's the cabin," said Thalia, pointing toward the mountain-side.

Snugly built in the shelter of the overhanging cliffs was a clean little dwelling, tidy and picturesque, constructed of stones and clay, with a roof of hand-hewn pine slabs. Behind it, at a little distance, was a shed or stable, and about the door of this some she-goats were browsing quietly, their kids tucked here and there asleep in the sunny patches, fluffy little balls of fur. The door of the cabin was slightly ajar. There was not a sound about the place, nor was there any smoke coming from the chimney.

Thalia and Dallas walked straight up to the cabin, then paused and the girl called aloud. There was no reply, but as they waited a large yellow cat came walking calmly out and with its tail straight in the air approached the girl and rubbed purring against her leg.

The man and the girl looked at each other and smiled.

"A kind welcome, at least," said he.

The wise-faced nanny-goats had been regarding them curiously, but with no sign of alarm. The kids also had raised their baby faces to look, and as Dallas spoke, one of the little creatures hopped upon its stumpy feet and came bounding toward him, first to butt playfully at his knee and then to sniff at his fingers with a soft, expectant little nose. The mother followed more slowly and sedately and with no trace of fear.

"If the people receive us as kindly as their animals," said Dallas, "we shall be in luck."

Thalia, who had been closely scrutinizing the cabin, turned to him a face which showed great relief.

"I think we have come to the right place," said she. "This is the cabin of a holy man, probably a hermit."

"Christian?"

"No; Mohammedan. But he must be really a good man, and no doubt kind, from the way his pets behave. Do you see those little scraps of rags fastened to the window shutters?"

"Yes. What are they?"

"Prayers—or, at least, reminders of prayers. Votive offerings of a sort. Let's look in."

They walked toward the cabin, and the cat followed, purring. As they reached the door, there was a fluttering over their heads, and a large jay came tumbling from the tree-tops, a flash of blue and gray shimmering feathers. The bird fluttered about their heads, then lighted on the window-sill and hopped inside.

Thalia glanced at Dallas and smiled, then, slipping a loop of cord from a peg in the door, pushed it open and entered.

Within was a single large room, quite bare and scrupulously neat and clean. There was a big open fireplace, and in one corner a sort of raised platform, on which were spread some sheepskins and a heavy woollen blanket. In the other corner were some shelves filled with what looked to be manuscripts. In front of the window stood a rough table, on which was an earthen vessel holding a cluster of late roses, beside which were a pair of big, steel-rimmed spectacles, an ink-well, a long plume pen, and a large leather-bound book. The jay-bird had entered through a crevice between the shutters and was pecking at some crumbs of bread on the table. It cocked its head, gave them a bright, inquiring look, then strutted back to the window and flew out with a burst of melody which sounded like bird laughter.

"There can't be much harm in this man," said Dallas. "Suppose we consider ourselves his guests."

He crossed the room and seated himself on the edge of the platform. Thalia, glancing at him, saw that his face was very pale, and that his lips were blue and trembling. She was at his side instantly.

"Lie down," said she. "I will build a fire, and then we must get off those wet clothes and see to your wounds."

Dallas stretched himself out and drew the blanket over him. His teeth were beginning to chatter, and all his strength had suddenly left him. He pulled out his match-box, which was fortunately watertight, and handed it to the girl. Thalia went out, to return presently with an armful of wood, and in a few moments there was a fire blazing on the hearth.

"Now we must make you comfortable," said she. "Are you in pain?"

"No—just a little stiff and sore." He began to struggle with his coat. Thalia went to his aid.

"I can manage," muttered Dallas.

"Nonsense! You are a wounded man, and I am your nurse."

"But——"

"Don't talk. Keep the blanket over you. Now let us get off this wet shirt. . . . Now let me see your arm. . . . What a wicked-looking little hole! The bullet is in there. Shouldn't it come out?"

"I don't see how we're going to manage it. Let it stay." Dallas sank back and pulled the blanket over him.



Thalia was tearing some cloth into strips. Hearing the ripping noise, Dallas turned his head and looked at her.

"What are you doing?"

"Don't ask questions."

"But you must n't——"

"Hush! I am going out now to get some pine balsam from one of those trees, to smear over the wound. That is Shkipetari treatment. It stings a little, but it is clean and healing."

"You're a wonder!" muttered Dallas.

The girl went out, to return presently with some of nature's ointment on a piece of bark, when the wounds were quickly bandaged. Dallas, wrapped in the big woollen blanket, with his head on a pile of sheepskins, fell into a doze. When he opened his eyes again, he saw that his clothes were drying in front of the fire, while Thalia stood beside him with a smile on her red lips and a bowl in her hand.

"I have been milking the goats. Come, Dallas, drink this. We were fortunate to find this place. There is corn-meal and cheese and olives and some dried plums, and I have found a little cave outside stored full of beet-roots and turnips and cabbages. Besides, there are some chickens shut up in a coop between the cabin and the cliffs. We shall not starve."

"Any sign of our host?"

"No. Do you know, Dallas, I have an idea that he may have heard the firing and gone across the river to see what it was all about? Perhaps he has persuaded the herders to go away."

"You have n't heard any more firing?"

"Not a shot."

"Then perhaps you are right."

"Oh, I hope so! I hope so!"

"He may have gone on with James and the others."

"But do you think that they would go without us?"

"Very possibly; because, you see, they would be likely to guess at our plan, and they must have heard the firing down there by the river. They could tell the crack of my .30-40, and very likely think that by this time we are miles away."

Thalia nodded thoughtfully, and for a few moments neither spoke. Presently Dallas muttered as if to himself, "Poor old James!"

"Why?" asked Thalia quickly.

"Think how worried he must be about you, Thalia."

"Why not about you?"

"Oh, well, I'm a man; and, you see, he's—in love with you."

"Indeed!"

Dallas looked at her curiously. "Of course he is. Has he never told you so?"

"Never."

"Well, he is."

"What makes you think so?"

"Oh, several things. Among others, his telling *me* so about sixteen time a day."

"And Paula? Are you not horribly worried about her?"

"Naturally. But I don't see what there is to do about it. I say, Thalia, it is James who ought to be here now in my place."

"Wounds and all? How nice of you!"

"I'd forgot all about the wounds."

"But not about Paula," said the girl in a low voice.

"But I'm not in love with Paula, nor she with me. I'm very fond of her, and think she's a little brick and the best little sport in the world, barring one. I say, Thalia, are n't my clothes almost dry?"

Thalia got up and examined the garments, which she had wrung out and hung before the hot blaze.

"Quite. Perhaps you had better put them on."

"I think so. I can manage; just give them to me, and then go out and play with the kids."

The girl obeyed in silence. A little later, when Dallas called her, she came in to find him dressed again and puzzling over the big book on the table by the platform.

"What's this thing?" asked Dallas.

"The Koran. Do you find it interesting?"

"Very. The whole state of affairs is that, but you are the most interesting of all, my dear girl."

She threw him a quick look, then walked to the door of the cabin and seated herself upon the threshold, where she remained in silence, watching the setting sun as it sank in a crimson glow behind the hill-tops far down the valley.

Presently she arose, and, walking to the table, poured some milk into the bowl, and, setting it on the hearthstone, called the yellow cat, which came purring and placidly proceeded to make its evening meal. Dallas looked at the two and smiled.

"Quite cozy and domestic," said he. "But really, I ought to be James."

Thalia turned to him swiftly; a little line had drawn itself between her eyes, which were dark and glowing.

"Can you think of nothing but James?" she demanded, with a little toss of her chin.

"But, Thalia——"

"It is just James, James, James. I must say, I don't think that it is in very good taste, Mr. Dallas."

"Oh, come, Thalia, you know perfectly well——"

"I don't know anything," she replied sharply, "except that you seem to be very much upset because it is you and not James here in this cabin with me. I have *tried* to take good care of you and to be cheerful, and not to show how anxious I have been, and worried, and—and——" She turned away with a little stamp of her sandaled foot.

"But, Thalia, don't you see—don't you think I'm appreciative of your pluck and resource and cheerfulness and all that? I am thinking about *you*."

"Indeed! One would never guess it! It seems as though you were thinking of nobody but James!"

"I am sorry."

"So am I—very! I wish it were—James." She stooped and began to stroke the cat. Dallas, lying on the platform, regarded her with a puzzled face.

"Do you really? Of course! Why should n't you?"

Outside, the late summer sunset had softened to a rich, delicious afterglow. Thalia got up suddenly and walked to the door, where she stood for a moment, breathing deeply the sweet evening air. A kid ran up to her and began to push its hard, downy little head playfully against her knees. The girl leaned down to stroke the small animal, then pushed one finger into the moist little mouth, when, play forgotten, it began to suck lustily and to bite with its baby teeth.

Dallas moved restlessly, when she turned and looked at him, her lovely face filled with shadows, and her eyes large and dark and inscrutable.

"I say, Thalia, you've had no supper."

"Indeed I have. Some corn-bread and milk and cheese. That is a feast for an Albanian. You see, Mr. Dallas, you are of a different race and one accustomed to luxury, whereas I am a Shkipetari hill girl, and able to live royally where you would starve. To-night you can have only warm milk, because you are an invalid and there is danger of fever from your wounds. But to-morrow, if you are doing nicely, you shall have some eggs and other delicacies, and be as carefully fed and cared for as if you were—James. There is not a great deal to do with, but I shall do my best, Mr. Dallas."

"Stop calling me Mr. Dallas."

Thalia did not answer. Presently Dallas said: "Where are you going to sleep?"

"On the floor in front of the fire."

"Indeed, you shall do nothing of the sort. Besides, you have no blanket."

"But where else can I sleep? And I do not need a blanket. You see, I am just a Balkan hill woman, and——"

"Stop it, Thalia! What is the matter with you?"

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean."

"You shall sleep here. I am going to sleep in front of the fire, myself."

"That is nonsense." Thalia crossed the room and walked to the side of the platform.

"I mean it. Do you think I'm going to pig everything, just because I've got a couple of buck-shot under my pelt? I shall camp in front of the fire." Forgetting his wounded arm, Dallas shoved himself upright, then sat swaying giddily from the pain caused by the effort.

"Dallas! Don't! Can't you be good? Lie down! Oh, please, please, please! If you only knew how worried I am about you!" Thalia's rich voice broke.

The man was too weak to contend further, so it ended in the girl's having her own way in sleeping in front of the fire, while Dallas sank back exhausted onto the platform.

#### PART V.

DALLAS was awakened by a thin sunbeam which had found its way through a crevice in the shutters and was shining directly into his eyes. He blinked and sat up, dazed and bewildered.

A stab of pain in his arm brought him quickly back to a sense of his surroundings. The wound of his head did not bother him, but his side was very sore. Otherwise, he felt himself quite fit and with no indication of fever.

Resting on one elbow, he looked about him with a smile. Outside, the jay-birds were protesting violently at the late opening hours of their restaurant, and the goats were bleating expectantly. From the brightness of the sunshine, Dallas guessed that the day must be well advanced, but as door and shutters were closed, the light in the cabin was still deeply subdued.

Snuggled up against the young man lay the yellow cat. In front of the fire slept the Lady Thalia, and Dallas, glancing with a smile from one to the other of his companions, found it impossible to determine which appeared to be the more at ease. Thalia's face was turned towards him; her cheek was on one palm, her lips slightly parted, and her wavy hair tumbled about her face, which was a little flushed and dewy with sleep. Her heavy, double-breasted tunic of homespun wool was loosened at the neck, and her soft throat looked very white and delicate against the rough fabric. In spite of her hard bed, she appeared to be sleeping as easily as a child tucked up in its crib.

As Dallas looked at her, his eyes grew tender. "Dear little girl,"

he thought. "No wonder James is crazy about her! Not many women could go through such an ordeal as yesterday and come out of it as fresh and undismayed."

He could not take his eyes from her, and perhaps the girl felt in her sleep the intensity of his gaze, for presently she sighed, yawned, straightened out her limbs like a pussy-cat, and sleepily pushed the hair back from her face with one small hand; then the long, dark lashes slowly lifted, and her tawny eyes looked straight into his. Wider they opened, and wider still, with an expression of such hopeless bewilderment that Dallas laughed outright. Then intelligence came flooding back and her face turned rosy pink.

"Oh!" she gasped, and sat up, gathering her tumbled hair in both hands. Her lips parted with a smile of embarrassment.

"How do you feel?" she asked, a trifle breathlessly.

"Like a fighting-cock. Did you have a good sleep?"

"Delicious! This mountain air! It got rather cold in the night, and I built up the fire. How do the wounds feel?"

"Would n't know that I had 'em! I think that they are going to close without making any trouble. There can't be much infection in this climate, and, besides, I always heal quickly."

Thalia leaned forward and began to lace up her sandals, then she rose and crossed the room.

"What are you up to now?" asked Dallas.

She threw him a saucy look. "I must give the baby his milk. Then I am going down for a dip in the river."

"You'll freeze!"

"I like cold water. Then I must milk the goats, and see if I can find some eggs for your breakfast. You are to lie still."

"It can't hurt me to get up."

"Yes, it can. You are to keep still."

"All right."

She threw him a suspicious glance, then went to the fire and heated some of the goat's milk, which Dallas drank with a wry face. Thalia laughed, then walked to the door of the cabin and threw it wide, letting in a flood of sunlight. On the threshold she paused.

"Now I am going to bathe. Be good!" She blew him a little kiss.

"Stop it," said Dallas.

"Stop what?"

"Throwing me kisses."

Thalia raised her eyebrows mockingly.

"What would James say?" growled Dallas.

"I had n't thought."

"Well, you must think! What if I were to throw a kiss back to you?"

"Dreadful! What would Paula say?"

"Oh, bosh! Run along and take your bath, and be careful."

When she had gone, Dallas got up and went out into the fresh, fragrant morning. Rather to his surprise, he found himself a little unsteady on his feet; also he discovered that moving about gave him considerable pain in his wounded side. When Thalia returned, fresh and glowing, she found him sitting on the threshold, basking in the warm sunlight.

"This is very naughty of you," said the girl. "Go straight back and lie down." And Dallas was forced to obey.

Upon the man's repeated refusals to allow her to sleep another night on the floor, the Lady Thalia collected some loose willow boughs and made for herself a rough, but effectual, screen around the platform corner. She consented to this arrangement only after she had moved the sheepskins over in front of the fire, so that Dallas could rest there in comparative comfort.

The day wore on, and the two remained in undisturbed possession of the little cabin. When the late shadows began to lengthen, Dallas was permitted to get up, and the two sat upon the threshold and watched the crimson afterglow flaming the skies over the dim hills to the westward. From the valley beneath, came the deep, caressing murmur of the river, and a faint breeze brought to them the night smells of the forest, sweet with the odors of balsam and fern. Soon the darkness came, and the ruddy light from the fire began to dance and flicker on the walls of the cabin. Then Dallas was sent to bed again and fed more milk and a vegetable soup, thickened with cornmeal. For a while the two discussed the continued absence of their host, and what it might portend, and why it was that nobody came near the little cabin.

"He is probably a holy man," said Thalia, "and no doubt does miracles, and the herders are afraid to come near. There was once such a *santon* who lived on the top of a mountain not far from my father's castle. He was a very holy man, and very kind, but all the people were afraid of him, because he used to talk with the dead and bring messages to the families of some of the Shkipetari from people who had been killed in feuds or perhaps murdered. Nobody would go near his hut when he was away or in a trance. Perhaps this man is like that."

"Are you afraid of such things, Thalia?"

"A little." She threw an apprehensive glance about the cabin.

"Afraid of the dead?" asked Dallas, amused.

"I like live people better." She moved a little closer. "We Shkipetari are rather superstitious. But I have lived so much in England that I am not like the others."



"How did you come to live so much in England?"

"My father was a very enlightened man and a great student. He sent me to Paris to school, and there I made the acquaintance of an English girl and used to visit at her home in England. Up here in these mountains it is different. But I am not afraid when I am with you."

So the days went by, but the girl would not hear of their leaving the cabin until all the soreness should have gone from Dallas's wounds. No human being came near to disturb the peace of their little haven of refuge. Their life became a quiet routine of homelike duties; mornings Thalia milked the goats and ground maize, of which there was a plentiful store, and cooked their simple meals, scarcely permitting Dallas to lift a hand in physical work of any kind. Late in the afternoons, the two sat upon the threshold and watched the early autumn sunsets, discussing many things, and watching the coming of darkness.

One evening as they sat at the cabin door, a splendid red-deer buck stalked out of the forest and stood for a moment stamping and snorting, and watching the two with bright, curious eyes. The night following there was a great bleating and scurrying among the goats. Thalia threw open the shutters and flung out a blazing firebrand, when the tumult ceased. In the morning they found the tracks of a wolf in the damp sand about the cabin.

And so a week passed. Then Dallas announced that he was fit for the trail. His wounds had healed, as a surgeon would say, by "first intention." The encysted buckshot caused him no inconvenience, and there seemed no reason why they should linger on.

The two took counsel sitting on the floor in front of the blazing fire. For some reason, both were sad at the thought of leaving the little home which they had come to regard as their own. Nothing had occurred to mar their perfect comradeship, although twice when discussing the possible fate of their friends Thalia had burst suddenly into a storm of self-reproach, asserting herself to be the cause of whatever tragedy might have happened and finishing in a paroxysm of tears. The second time, Dallas had thrown his arm about her shoulders and talked to her as soothingly as though she had been an overwrought child, a method which proved singularly effective. The frenzy of her grief abated, he had drawn a little apart and reasoned with her quietly until she had recovered her self-control.

From time to time the young man had talked to her of Sir James, describing his many admirable qualities, and dwelling to some length upon the Englishman's oft-asserted devotion to herself and the many excellent results which might accrue to both if they were to marry.

To all of this Thalia had listened with downcast eyes, an occasional sidelong glance, and a rather pale and inscrutable face.

"We can make Dakabar easily in two days, Thalia," said Dallas, as the two sat staring into the flames. "That scoundrel Dimitri told me that the trail crossed the river at a ford a little above here."

Thalia nodded. "You are right," she answered listlessly. "We will go to-morrow. I will put some bread and boiled potatoes and chestnuts in a sack, and we will start. I suppose that the wolf will get the goats, and poor Mimi will have to catch mice, but you are right; we must not stay here any longer."

The odd note in her voice caused Dallas to look at her sharply. Thalia's face was quite pale, and her eyes were dark and misty.

"You speak as if you did not want to go," said he.

"Really?" She gave him a masked look. "Why should I want to stop here any longer?"

"I can't imagine. I should think that you could hardly wait to learn what has happened to Paula and James."

Thalia looked at him with glowing eyes and a bright red spot in either cheek.

"Of course I want to know what has happened to Paula and James," she retorted. "Have I not been nearly mad from anxiety? But I have tried to be patient, and not to show it, and have cooked, and gathered wood, and milked, and slept on planks, because I did not think that you ought to travel until your wounds were healed."

"Thalia!"

"And now you look at me with surprise and say, 'We have wasted time enough.'"

"But I haven't said anything of the kind!"

"You have implied it!" Her voice rose slightly in pitch. "I'm sure I don't know what would have happened to you if we had started sooner!"

"But, my dear little girl, don't you suppose that I appreciate——"

"No!" cried Thalia furiously; "I don't think that you have sense enough to appreciate anything! Unless it is—James!"

"Thalia!"

"Or Paula!"

"Thalia! Stop it!" Dallas stared at her in bewilderment. Thalia looked back defiantly. Her chin was thrust out, and her eyes, sombre and half-veiled by their long lashes, were staring into the fire over the curve of her flushed cheeks. Her black hair, with its lurid tones of sienna, was tumbled about her ears, and her breath was coming quickly.

Dallas reached for her hand, but the girl snatched it angrily away.

"You're overwrought, my dear, and I must say I don't blame you," said Dallas. "The strain has been enough to make any woman——"

"Oh, so you think I am complaining?"

"Not a bit of it; but I do think that you are feeling the strain of it all."

"I am not feeling the strain of anything, unless it is that of being continually criticised and misunderstood."

"But, Thalia, I understand."

"Really?" Thalia's red lip curled.

"Well!" cried Dallas, in desperation. "Then what is the matter?"

"There is nothing the matter."

"Then why are you so angry?"

"I am not angry. What is there to be angry about?"

"But why do you blame me for wanting to go on?"

"I am not blaming you. It is you who are blaming me, and hinting that I am not as anxious as I ought to be about Paula and—James!" She struck her sandaled foot repeatedly against the floor, then leaned over to tighten the thongs about her round ankle. "I know why you are so restless and anxious to be on"—she threw him a sidelong glance. "It is because your tobacco is all gone."

"No," answered Dallas softly; "it's because my—something else is almost gone."

Thalia half turned her head and looked at him under lowered lashes.

"What do you mean?" she asked rather breathlessly.

"I mean," answered Dallas slowly, and without looking at her, "that you are the dearest and sweetest and loveliest woman whom I have ever known; and that sometimes I find it very hard to remember that my dearest friend has told me that he cares for you."

Thalia looked at him fixedly, her amber eyes almost black, and the glare of the fire reflected crimsonly on her lovely face.

"But I don't care for him," she answered in a very low voice.

"You ought to."

"Oh, but I do in one way. He is splendid and chivalrous and straightforward, and of course I appreciate all that he has done for me. But"—her voice fell—"I don't love him."

Dallas looked into her face; his eyes were glowing like embers.

"But you did. At least, you cared a good deal—before we went up the side of that mountain."

"And what if I did? I had never told him so, nor had he ever said that he cared for me!"

"That's because he's too fine and generous, and you were in a way under his care."

"And how about yourself? Did James tell me to let go when I was holding him half balanced on the side of a cliff? Did he tell me to let go for fear I'd be dragged over and killed, too?"

"He would have done so quickly enough if he had been the one!" muttered Dallas.

"I don't doubt it!" Thalia gasped and the words came pouring out pell-mell. "And did James fight for me? And was he wounded for me? And did I swim out and save him when he was struggling in the current? And did I nurse him, and feed him, and——"

"Thalia, Thalia!" Dallas groaned. "Stop it! Oh, my dear, don't you see how hard you are making it for me?"

She turned her lurid eyes to his.

"And don't you suppose that you are making it hard for me, and have been right along with your everlasting talk of James, James, James! Oh, Dallas, Dallas, it is *you* that I love! Just *you, you, you!* I have never loved anybody else! I shall never love any one else! Oh, my dear, my dear!" She began to sob, and her body swayed back and forth and threw dancing shadows on the cabin walls.

Dallas turned to her swiftly, his face very pale and his eyes aflame.

"Thalia! My own darling! I adore you!" His voice choked.

She turned her face to him, the tears sparkling on her cheeks. Dallas raised both arms, but before he could clasp her Thalia's own were about his neck and her face crushed to his. Her sobs broke out afresh.

"Thalia!" cried Dallas, crushing her to him. "My own darling! I love you more than anything in the world." He kissed the tears from the hot, flushed cheeks. "I shall tell James all about it, sweet-heart. He is big and generous. He will understand. But until I do, you must help me, dear; or I would despise myself for all the rest of my life."

The minutes flew by, and still he held her close, talking to her soothingly until presently her sobs ceased and she looked up at him with a smile.

"Yes, dearest," she whispered; "I understand. I will help you. And you really love me—and don't love Paula?"

"Darling! I love only you!"

Noon of the following day found them climbing a high pass in the hills, with the river a silvery thread far below. On either side was dense forest, alternating with bare, boulder-strewn hill-sides, and the air was fine and keen and filled with sunshine.

Presently their trail led out across the shoulder of a high hill, whence they were able to look away for leagues to the southward, over a wonderful expanse of hill and valley, the whole of which seemed

to be enclosed by a high, broken wall of mountains blue with distance and filled with marvellous shadows of saffron and amethyst.

"Those are the North Albanian Alps," said Thalia. "They form part of the southern boundary of Novibazar. My people came originally from the other side of that range, but the Turks drove them northward, and now we occupy those slopes which you see down toward the end of the valley. Near the castle where I lived when my father was alive, there are two little streams which rise almost side by side, and one of them flows into the Danube and the other into the *Ægean* Sea."

"Really? And where does Prince Emilio come from?"

"From a place called Rascia, not far from the town of Novibazar. We are quite near neighbors; not more than a six-hour journey on foot."

"Do you know this road, Thalia?"

"I have never been here before, but I know it a little farther on, where it strikes the valley of the Lim. Higher up it crosses the main road from Cetinje to Nis. Look, my dear"—she pointed down the steep slope. "Here come some people."

Twice during the morning they had avoided other travellers. The first whom they had met were Mohammedan plum-growers, packing down their dried prunes on a train of meagre mountain ponies. The others were Serb swineherds, a savage, filthy crew.

Climbing up the precipitous bank, they crouched behind a clump of bracken, and waited for the new-comers to pass. These proved to be a troupe of *Chingéni*, or Balkan gypsies. They were a ragged lot of nomads, perhaps twenty in all, with warm, swarthy skins, features of markedly Hindu type, and dark, lustrous eyes. The *hamals*, powerful young fellows, were carrying packs almost as large as those borne by the dozen wretched ponies. Two young women, superbly made, were swinging easily up the steep incline, each with a child carried in a sort of sling. A lame man sitting astride an overloaded pony was playing a violin, and playing marvellously well, it seemed to Dallas. The caravan passed chattering up the trail, when the two refugees came out of their hiding-place.

"They are striking across the mountains for the big road from Belgrade to Constantinople," said Thalia. "They will meet it on the Morava, then pass on up through Trajan's Gate, and probably hold right on for Stamboul, where no doubt they have their winter *mal-hallah*."

Presently the path began to descend, and a little later led through a gorge, marvellously beautiful, with bare, rocky walls and a cataract foaming at the bottom. The two had paused to admire the savage wildness of the place when Thalia exclaimed:

"Some one is coming!"

Dallas listened and heard the clatter of many hoofs on the rocky trail below them. He glanced quickly about for a place where they might get under cover, but there was none to be had. Above them rose sheer, bare crags, and below, the ground, while not very steep, was naked of bush or boulder.

"We shall have to run back up the trail," said he.

"Too late," answered Thalia. "Here they come."

"What are they—soldiers?"

A troop of horsemen had appeared around a curve of the road ahead and was approaching at a rapid walk. The riders looked to be uniformed, and were armed with guns. But the two fugitives gave scarcely a glance at the men, for riding at their head was a colossal figure, khaki-clad, with a *kalpak* of fine astrakhan set over a fierce, deep-lined face, which even at that distance portrayed its characteristic features of black, bushy eyebrows and heavy black mustache and imperial.

"Rosenthal!" cried Dallas.

At the same instant the Jew had recognized the fugitives. With a harsh exclamation, he spurred his horse forward to rein up with a jerk in front of them.

"*Sapristi!*" cried Rosenthal. "What luck! What good fortune! I was afraid you was killed!"

He flung himself from his horse, threw the reins to one of his men, and strode toward Dallas, his diabolic face working with emotion and one big hand thrust in front of him, the palm opening and closing spasmodically.

"Py chingo!" he cried in his harsh voice, "but this is a pleasure to find you alive and unhurt!" He seized Dallas in his great arms and actually embraced him, then turned to Thalia and laughed. "*Sapristi!* But who is this handsome boy?" Before the astonished girl could avoid it, he had embraced her also, and would no doubt have kissed her on both cheeks had she not twisted her head aside. Rosenthal was bubbling over with delight. "Belief me, I could not be more overjoyed if I had sold my silver mines for one hundred t'ousand pounds. Nefer haf I been so worried! I had come to t'ink that you must haf been killed!"

He beamed upon them with a grin which was almost a physical violence in itself. His bushy eyebrows worked up and down, and his yellow teeth were bared like those of a grinning wolf. But the big, deeply-scored, vital face was filled with such a real benevolence as to disarm its savagery of feature. Dallas felt himself ridiculously like a runaway child caught while playing truant by a kind but undesired pedagogue. As for Thalia, the girl was regarding the big Jew



with the peculiar expression of half-repulsion, half-fascination, which quite expressed the emotions with which he inspired her.

"But where haf you been, you naughty children?" cried Rosenthal. "*Sapristi!* If you only knew how I haf worried! And if you knew what a bad time I haf been giving Prince Emilio since I discovered it was all his doing!"

"His doing?" echoed Dallas.

"Ah, yes. You did not guess? You see, Dimitri was my man, and he had instructions to see that you came to no harm."

Dallas was staring at the Jew through narrow lids, and eyes as cold and green as jade.

"So it was all a trap arranged by you and Prince Emilio?" he asked.

"Let me egsplain," protested Rosenthal. "We knew, of course, that you were in Belgrade. Such foolish boys! Because, you see, you played right into our hands. I vas afraid that Thalia might haf appealed to the Turkish and Austrian ministers, and then we might haf had to let her go. But I t'ought that you would be there, and when I learned you were I sent my man Dimitri to you. He is my confidential agent."

"He *was*," corrected Dallas grimly.

Rosenthal grinned at him like an indulgent parent.

"You shooted him! I do not plame you. Yes, he vas my confidential agent. I haf t'em eferywhere. If you wished to know what King Leopold had for his dinner last night, or what lady the President Castro went to see, I could tell you to-morrow. So, you see, it all suited my plans and looked like a very easy way to get Lady Thalia safe to Rascia wit'out any fuss and scandal. I had told Dimitri to be sure that no one vas hurted."

"Rather tough on Dimitri that I did n't have the same instructions," said Dallas ironically.

"Ah, my poy, you did r'right. Ven I had gone, Emilio bribes Dimitri to haf you two boys shooted. He has nefer forgiven you for that blow in the face. But then, he is a pig of a Servian. Dimitri was to come and say that you resisted and were shooted, which might have happened."

"How did you find this out?" asked Dallas.

"From the gossip that goes over these hills, and then I made Emilio confess. It appears that there vas a hermit, a holy man, who put a stop to that nonsense and brought Sir Chames and Paula to Dakabar."

Dallas and Thalia exchanged glances of infinite relief.

"And Sir James's servant?" asked the girl.

"He is t'ere, too. Sir Chames got a buck-shot in his neck, but

is not hurted bad. This hermit is now making lots of troubles at Dakabar. He is himself Albanian." He turned to Thalia. "It is Ishmi Bey."

"Ishmi Bey?" echoed the girl. "He was my father's dearest friend," she said to Dallas, "and he has a blood feud with Emilio."

Rosenthal nodded. "Yes," said he. "That was a very bad business. A band of Emilio's burned his house and carried away his wife and daughters. T'en he vent away and nobody knew what had become of him. Now he is back in Dakabar, gathering the Shkipetari from all ofer the hills. There is going to be troubles, and"—he grinned—"myselluf I am not so sorry, because I see a chance to get back my forty t'ousand pounds. But come, children. Ve must go."

"Go where?" demanded Dallas.

Rosenthal lifted his bushy eyebrows.

"To Rascia, of course," said he.

"Why not to Dakabar?"

The Jew shook his big head. "Ah, my boy, you may go if you like; but Thalia must come vith me. I am fery sorry, but business is business. If she vent back to Dakabar, she vould spoil it all, und I vould lose my forty t'ousand pounds."

Dallas bit his lower lip, and his face hardened.

"Look here, Baron," said he suddenly, "we are your prisoners. If you will take us to Dakabar, I will buy your filthy silver mines and pay you forty thousand pounds."

For a moment Rosenthal stared. His big eyes opened very wide, and their hazel-colored spots seemed to grow more accentuated, while the outer corners of his bushy eyebrows were pushed up until they almost met his grizzled hair. Then suddenly he threw back his great head and roared with laughter. Still shouting hoarsely, he clapped Dallas on the shoulder, almost knocking the young man off his feet.

"By chingo, but it is funny! Excuse me if I laugh, Mr. Dallas, but it is so very funny! No! Business is business, but Isidor Rosenthal has not yet turned brigand! No! T'at vould not be business!" And again the raucous laugh burst out, to come reëchoing back in hoarse cachinnations from the rocky wall on the other side of the gorge.

The Jew turned and mounted his big black horse, the back of which sagged under his great bulk. He gave a harsh order in the Serbo-Croatian tongue, at which two of the troopers dismounted.

"Come," said Rosenthal, wiping his eyes with a silk handkerchief heavily scented with musk. "We must go, children. Get up on these horses. No"—he waved his big hand—"it is no use to argue, Mr. Dallas! You shall leave us where the road turns off for Dakabar, just beyond Iverntsk. The Lady Thalia must come vith me to Rascia.

Business is business"—he laughed again—"but Isidor Rosenthal is not yet a brigand!"

Seeing the utter futility of argument, Dallas put Thalia on her pony and mounted, himself, when Rosenthal wheeled, and the little calvalcade moved forward. They descended into the valley of the Lim, then turned southeast. Rosenthal went on ahead, followed by some of his men, in the midst of whom rode Dallas and Thalia side by side, the dismounted troopers being left to find their way back on foot as best they might.

For several miles Dallas rode in silence, pale and furious, and answering Thalia's remarks in curt monosyllables.

"Who are these men?" he asked finally.

"Emilio's servants and guards."

"Soldiers?"

"No. The only actual militia in this country are Turks. You see, it is a Turkish *sanjak*. But Emilio stands very well with the Porte, and he is permitted to maintain a sort of constabulary to protect himself from the Shkipetari, who hate the Turks almost as much as they do the Serbs. You see, the whole state of affairs is horribly confused; and what the Turks want more than anything else is to keep the peace. As a result, they are friendly with both parties, so far as they can be."

"So we've got to part," said Dallas bitterly.

Thalia looked at him with a sad smile. "When you get to Daka-bar," said she, "tell Ishmi Bey not to fight."

It was still early in the afternoon when the little cavalcade arrived at a village situated on the bank of the swift stream.

"Iverntsk," said Thalia. "The people of this *zadruga* were nearly all massacred a few years ago by one of Emilio's bands. The same old story! Emilio's people are mostly Christians of the Bulgarian Church, and his *zadruga* belongs to the orthodox Greek Church. That is their method of converting each other."

The little hamlet appeared deserted as their troop clattered through. Opposite a modest edifice of mud and stone, Rosenthal drew in his horse, tossed the reins to a trooper, and swung his great body to the ground.

"This is a *han*—a tavern," he said to Dallas. "Let us dismount for a cup of coffee and some olives."

He lifted Thalia to the ground as if she had been a child. Dallas also dismounted, and all three were about to enter the door of the inn when one of the troopers called out sharply to a man who appeared to be the captain of the guard.

"What is that?" said Rosenthal. "Does he say that there are horsemen coming?"

He raised his hand for silence, and for a moment they stood listening. The white, dusty road led straight through the village, the small houses built close together and facing it on either side. At the extreme end of the street there was a high mud wall, above which one saw the dull green foliage of an olive orchard, and, beyond, the roof of a rather more elaborate dwelling than the others, apparently the home of the patriarch, or communal head of the *zadruga*. In front of this estate the road turned sharply at a right angle and was hid from view by some low mud cottages.

From this direction there came the distant rumble of many hoofs. The sound rapidly increased in volume, indicating that whatever the party which approached, it was travelling at a rapid pace. Rosenthal's Serbs were glancing from one to the other with knit brows and muttering interrogations, while the face of the big Jew himself wore an expression of extreme disgust.

"*Sapristi!*" he growled. "Who can this be?" He called out sharply to his captain, who shrugged and answered a few guttural words.

"A Turkish *hamdié*," muttered Rosenthal, scowling. "*Peste!* But that will be embarrassing! I have no official permission to be leading a troop of armed men through these hills. The commanding officer will ask awkward questions! He will want to know why I did not refer this matter of looking for the Lady Thalia to him!"

"And I shall tell him!" said Thalia maliciously.

Rosenthal threw her a look of reproach.

"*Peste!*" he growled. "You would not do that! You would not do anything so ungrateful!"

• Dallas laughed outright, and the Jew grinned. At the same moment the rumble which had developed into a sharp clatter of many hoofs diminished. A cloud of dust rose suddenly over the low tiled roofs at the end of the street, and the next moment the head of a column of horsemen turned the corner, then quickly halted.

There was a moment of silence, followed instantly by a clamor of voices from Rosenthal's men, and a sharp order from the captain.

The troop was thrown into confusion. With an oath, Rosenthal sprang to mount his horse. With one hand on the animal's neck and one foot in the stirrup, he turned to look at Dallas over his shoulder.

"Get out of the way!" he cried harshly. "Into the *han!* There is going to be a fight!"

But Dallas and the girl had scarcely heard his words. Their eyes were rivetted on the horsemen clustered at the bend of the road, for at their head were Sir James, Connors, and a tall, bearded man in fez and tunic, who, even as they looked, snatched the yataghan from his sash and whirled the blade above his head.

"The Shkipetari!" cried Thalia.

Rosenthal's men, taken completely by surprise, were struggling to unsling their carbines. But the Albanian leader gave them scant time. Swinging in his saddle, he shouted a harsh order and pointed toward Rosenthal's Serbs with the blade of his yataghan. The next instant the Shkipetari were hurled in assault.

Dallas had barely time to drag Thalia up the steps and into the *han* before the Albanians had struck their enemy. The street was narrow, and the powdery dust of the road swept up in such dense swirling clouds that for several moments it was impossible to follow the fortunes of the fight. Horses and men were down, and the combatants were so tightly wedged as to be unable to use rifle or carbine. But the yataghans were busy, and presently, as the dust slightly settled, the two in the doorway of the *han* were able to see what was happening.

Sir James, his face as fierce as any of the savage ones about him, was firing to right and left. Once, at the elbow of the Englishman, they caught sight of Connors, who had emptied his revolver and was fighting with the steel, like those about him. A moment later a gaunt, black-bearded man came hewing his way through with blows of terrific force and quickness, while his fierce face peered constantly this way and that as if in search of some one.

Thalia put her lips close to Dallas's ear. "That is Ishmi Bey," she said.

But the pivotal centre of the fight was Rosenthal. Squarely in the middle of the street, the Jew's big bulk loomed through the swirling dust, while his harsh voice, admonishing friend and foe, rose above the din of the fight. He had been armed only with a carbine, but as the crush was so thick he had seized the weapon by the muzzle and used it as a club.

The uproar was appalling. Above the clash and clatter of steel rose the yells of the Shkipetari and the screams of the wounded men and stricken horses, but over all blared out from time to time the deep-chested roar of the Jew. The Serbs were fighting for their lives, knowing well that no quarter would be given by their savage, kilted enemies, to whom such slaughter was as the very breath of their nostrils. The Shkipetari were considerably fewer in numbers, but no living bone and muscle could withstand the fury of their attack. Backward down the road they forced the Serbs, while the blinding dust rose thicker and thicker. Rosenthal alone appeared to hold his own; planted in the middle of the street, he fought like a huge, raging Mephistopheles, his clothes in ribbons and the blood streaming down his satanic face. Now and then Dallas caught a glimpse of Sir James; the Englishman had torn the carbine from the hands of a Serb and

was fighting like the Jew, his weapon clubbed. Backward the Serbs were forced, struggling over the bodies of men and horses, until presently Rosenthal alone blocked the road. Ishmi Bey had fought his way on past him and was the centre of a swirling vortex, his streaming yataghan flashing up and down like a tongue of red flame.

By this time many of the Albanians were on their feet, leaping here and there, now pausing to thrust at a fallen enemy or springing aside to lash at a mounted one. Then a rift in the swirling dust showed Sir James knee to knee with Rosenthal. Dallas saw the Jew strike a savage blow, which the Englishman parried. With a hoarse shout, Rosenthal raised in his stirrups to strike again, when Connors, who had stuck close to the elbow of his master, sprang forward and cut savagely at the Jew with his yataghan. Rosenthal parried with his gun-barrel, but the blade glanced and found the side of his shaggy head. The Jew swayed in his saddle, then lurched sideways and came crashing to the ground.

Sir James and Connors wheeled to plunge again into the fight, which had surged on down the street. Dallas leaped from the doorway, and, seizing Rosenthal under the arms, dragged his huge bulk across the threshold of the inn. The road was strewn with men and horses, while the fight itself was completely veiled in the swimming clouds of dust, which presently began to dissolve when from the distance came the sound of scampering hoofs. What was left of the Servian troop had broken into flight.

Dallas and Thalia stared at each other with pale faces. At their feet the body of the big Jew heaved convulsively, then struggled to a sitting posture. From head to foot the man was a grimy mass of blood and dust, and his breath was coming in great, labored gasps. For a moment he looked about vacantly; then the expression came back into the big brown eyes with their multiple hazel dots.

"*Mein Gott!*" he panted. "It vas not vort' it! Forty t'ousand pounds! Bah!" He raised both hands to a long, jagged cut on the side of his head, from which the blood was oozing sluggishly.

"So you're not dead?" said Dallas.

"I don't t'ink so. But I deserf to be! Forty t'ousand pounds! Bah!"

He spat and wiped his mouth with the back of his grimy sleeve, then looked up at Thalia and grinned.

"*Sapristi!* I do not like to fight! It is not goot business, and bad for the health! *Sapristi!* But it is very bad for the health. I might easily haf been killed, and then of what goot would be my forty t'ousand pounds? And t'ink of the grief of my dear vife in Buda-Pesth! But vat could I do?" He spread out his grimy hands



apologetically. "You cannot arbitrate ven a friend is clubbing at you vit' a gun-barrel!"

"Let me tie up your head," said Thalia.

"T'anks. Sir Chames is a goot boy. It vould haf broken my heart to haf split his skull. *Mein Gott!* Vat a business!"

## PART VI.

DALLAS and Thalia, with the assistance of a few of the frightened villagers, were doing what they could for the wounded when up rode Sir James and Connors, both covered from head to foot with blood and dust, but neither seriously hurt. Some distance behind them strode the tall, bearded man whom Thalia had recognized as the hermit, Ishmi Bey.

Sir James dismounted and came toward them, his grimy face glowing with delight.

"Thank God!" he cried huskily. "We had almost given you up. We were starting out to look for you this morning when we ran head first into this gang of Emilio's. I tried to prevent a row, but there was no holding Ishmi Bey and the Shkipetari."

He took Thalia's hand in both of his and carried it to his lips, then turned to Dallas with glistening eyes.

"Might have known you'd win through, old chap! I say, that was a ripping shot you made on Dimitri! It was all a put-up job of those two scoundrels, Rosenthal and Emilio."

"Rosenthal had nothing to do with the plan to murder us," said Dallas.

"Did n't he? I'm glad of that. It did n't seem to me like the old Baron to play that sort of a filthy game. Too bad. If we had known that, we'd have passed him by just now."

"He's not much hurt," said Dallas.

Sir James's face expressed relief. "Glad of it," said he heartily, then glanced up to see the Baron himself standing in the door of the *han*, his head swathed in bandages.

"Hello, Baron!" called the Englishman heartily. "Glad you were not killed, old chap."

"T'anks. And I am glad you were not hurted, Sir Chames. This fight vas not of my choosing. Now I am finished. My forty t'ousand pounds can go to the devil. I am not afraid to say ven I am beat. Vonce I vas beaten in Macao by a Chinaman, and vonce in Hayti by a nigger named Fouchère. Now I am beat in the Balkans by two boys and two girls." He grinned.

Sir James looked about him and shook his head.

"Nasty work," said he, "but there was no help for it. When

our crowd saw these people of Emilio's they went crazy. We had better get to Dakabar as soon as we can, or there will be a hanged sight worse row than this. The Shkipetari have been pouring in from the mountains, and nothing will do but they must attack Emilio."

"How is Paula?" Dallas asked.

A peculiar expression of embarrassment appeared on the battle-stained face of the Englishman.

"She is very well, but awfully worried about you two."

Ishmi Bey had greeted Thalia, and the two were talking in low tones. The surviving Albanians had come straggling back, a few mounted and some on foot. There was not a man of them who did not carry some wound.

"Let's get out of this," said Sir James, "before we have a Turkish *zaptié* down on our backs. The whole thing is a bit irregular."

"How about the wounded?" asked Dallas.

Sir James shrugged. "The villagers will have to look after them. They will do it, I fancy, for fear of both parties." He turned to Rosenthal. "How did you leave the dear Prince, Baron?"

"I am finished vit' Emilio," he answered harshly. "I do not hold vit' murderers and assassins, Sir Chames. If you do not object, I will go to Dakabar."

Two hours later found them winding up into the hills. At the head of the cavalcade strode the tall, gaunt figure of Ishmi Bey, walking at the stirrup of the Lady Thalia, with whom he was in earnest conversation. A short distance behind them Rosenthal rode alone, sitting his big horse droopingly, a huge and somewhat dejected figure, with his massive head swathed in bandages. Sir James and Dallas came next, followed by Connors and such of the Albanians as were fit to travel.

"There is going to be the very deuce of a row, Stephen," said Sir James. "The most of the inhabitants of this sanjak of Novibazar are South Slavonic Serbs. This whole district is the cradle of the Servian race, and the Prince Emilio is the ranking feudal chief. Thalia, on the other hand, is pure Albanian, only connected to Emilio by marriage, and her people are all Albanian, Græco-Latin stock, and descendants of the ancient Illyrians. They have no fixed religion; they are Christians of both Greek and Bulgarian Churches and Mohammedans of all grades. The Turks first drove them up into these hills, and so they hate the Turks, and the Serbs have always been trying to drive them back again, and so they hate the Serbs. Also, they are forever fighting among themselves, and so they hate one another."

"A cheerful crowd," observed Dallas.

"Are they not? They have always got to be fighting somebody. When Constantine Bey, Thalia's father, was alive, he did a lot to keep the peace, and in reward got assassinated himself. His friend and cousin, Ishmi Bey, laid the murder to Emilio's door, and Emilio discovered it, and one night paid him a visit and burned his castle and carried off his womenkind."

"Nice young man, Emilio."

"Quite so. He appears to have formed the habit. Ishmi Bey was not strong enough to retaliate, and finally appears to have decided that he was cursed of Allah, and hauled off into the woods and built himself the cabin which you and Thalia found, and turned holy man. When he heard the firing he came across the river and persuaded the herders to clear out, and then conducted us to Dakabar. We did not worry about you as much as we might have done, because one of the herders came back and said that you had shot three of the gang and got across the river unhurt. So we hurried along, hoping to overtake you on the trail to Dakabar. It never occurred to us that you might be wounded, as the last that we heard was the crack of your 'thirty-fourty.'"

Dallas nodded. "I should not have been shot if I had n't been a fool," he said.

"When we found nothing of you," continued Sir James, "we hurried on to Dakabar, collected a mounted force, and came back the next day to look for you. This is the third searching expedition that we have made, and this time we took a strong party with the idea of combing the hills all over the place until we got some news of you. Meanwhile, Ishmi Bey has passed the word into the hills that the Prince Emilio has tried to murder the Lady Thalia and her party, and the Shkipetari have been pouring into Dakabar from all sides. There must be five hundred of them there now, all spoiling for a fight, and I do not think that Thalia and Ishmi Bey combined can keep them from attacking Emilio within the next forty-eight hours. They are led by a crazy fanatic, Sheik Izzat, and they mean to make a clean sweep of Emilio and all his tribe."

"I should like to be at the party," said Dallas.

"So should I. We've got a little score with Emilio. Suppose we go along."

"All right. I might even so far forget myself as to take a snap-shot at His Highness if opportunity offered. How did Paula stand the ordeal?"

Sir James glanced up quickly and his swarthy color grew slightly darker. Dallas, staring between his pony's ears, failed to observe the confusion of his friend.

"Like a veteran," answered Sir James. "I got a slug through

the muscles of the neck, and she——” He paused awkwardly. Dallas, intent on his own thoughts, did not notice it. For a while the two friends rode in silence; then Sir James remarked in a voice slightly different from his usual tone:

“Odd how sharing mutual danger appears to draw people together.”

Dallas glanced at him sharply. “Why should n’t it?” he asked.

Sir James’s swarthy color deepened, and for a moment he did not answer.

“Look here, Stephen”—he turned abruptly to his friend. “Do you consider that a situation can arise such as—er—the sharing of mutual danger, which could possibly justify—or at least—h’m—ah—extenuate the circumstance of a man’s forgetting his duty to a friend where—h’m—ah—a woman was concerned?”

Dallas turned and stared at him with a rigid face. He could scarcely believe his ears. He had intended at the first opportunity to tell Sir James of all that had passed between Thalia and himself, and to offer such amends as lay within his power. But to be, as he supposed, subjected to an inquisition which was founded on mere suspicion and narrow-minded jealousy aroused his quick and keen resentment.

Sir James met the steely look, and his own face hardened. Then he glanced away, flushing crimsonly, and began to tug at his wiry mustache.

“No,” said Dallas curtly; “I don’t. Do you?”

“Er—er—no,” answered Sir James, then blurted out: “Theoretically.”

Dallas regarded him through narrowed lids.

“Suppose we drop the woman part of it, James,” said he in his coldest voice, “until we get this other business off our hands.”

“Quite so,” said Sir James, and the two fell silent again.

The full hunter’s moon hanging poised above the silvery crest of the Dovo-Dagh looked down upon a wild and savage host as it wound up through the forested defiles of the north Albanian Alps.

For the Shkipetari were afoot and moving swiftly and silently to strike at the throat of their hereditary foe. An odd five hundred mountaineers had rallied at the hot message sent into the hills by Ishmi Bey, holy man and martyr to the cruelty of Prince Emilio. Foul wrong had been done to the Lady Thalia, daughter of their hereditary chief, and even more, and that which brought a savage oath to the lips of every shaggy Arnaut to whom the message reached, the Prince was plotting to sell themselves and their free hills to the hated Servians.

For several days they had come dropping into Dakabar, singly or

in squads. Fierce-visaged fathers had stalked down from their mountain fastnesses, their half-grown sons at their heels. Many were of different sects, blood enemies, victims or victors of sanguinary family feuds, but these, while eying askance the members of rival clans, had laid aside their private wrongs for the common cause.

Arms and costumes differed widely. There were men clad only in sheepskins, with the wool turned in, and tight-fitting caps of white; others were more elaborately dressed in *kalpaks* of black wool, sometimes of astrakhan, with short, full-sleeved tunics, white kilts, woollen stockings, and shoes of red leather, with tufts of black wool upon the toes. Nearly all the men carried guns—long weapons with narrow barrels, often richly ornamented with traceries and patterns wrought in silver and gold. Every one was armed with the weapon so dear to the native heart, the yataghan.

There were sheiks among them, and priests of both Greek and Bulgarian Churches, who eyed each other askance and with more vindictiveness than they did the devotees of Islam. The entire horde—for it could scarcely be called an army—was under the nominal command of one Sheik Izzat, himself a hermit who had gone half mad as the result of wrong dealt him by the Turks. But once in motion there was no pretense of leadership. The object of the expedition as understood by all was to strike a final and fatal blow at the hated stronghold of the Prince, and every man would fight his own fight in his own way.

So, as they strode along with the swift, springy step of the mountaineer, there was no dissension in the ranks. Mussulman jostled shoulders with Christian; pastoral feuds between herders and maize-growers were forgotten; men from different valleys looked at each other for the first time without the hand going to the hilt of the yataghan. If there were any rivalry, it was only as to who should strike first, hardest, and last.

At the head of the "column," if so it could be called, Sir James rode at the side of Ishmi Bey, with whom he conversed in French. The holy man had done his best to persuade the mountaineers to return peacefully to their homes. But once gathered, it had proven impossible to disband them. In the end they had clamored for Sheik Izzat to lead them against Rascia, when Ishmi Bey had accompanied the horde in the hope of giving such direction as he could to the evolutions of what was little better than a savage mob.

For some distance the road passed through heavy forest. The wind was blowing a clear gale; overhead, the tree-tops swayed and crashed, filling the air with their flying leaves, while the brilliant moonlight filtered through in swirling splashes of silvery light.

They wound up through a defile, skirted the flank of a mountain,

and emerged presently upon a bare, boulder-strewn hillside, against which the moon blazed with startling brilliancy. The path ascended in a series of zigzags, and at the top of the wind-swept ridge Ishmi Bey drew rein. Dallas and Connors slipped from their horses, and the four men turned to look back upon the following Shkipetari.

The effect was curious and startling. Below them the vivid moonlight shone and glittered from the huge fantastic boulders which were composed of a gneiss and mica-schist, and which flashed back the shimmering rays until all the hillside seemed a vast heap of gleaming gems. Blackest shadows lay here and there, alternating patches of glowing moonlight. Slipping invisibly from these areas of gloom to flitter across the patches of bright light came a swarm of leaping figures, now appearing, now disappearing, suggesting trolls issuing from the depths of the earth to pilfer a Titan treasure-trove. Ignoring the zigzag path, they came springing straight up the steep hillside, and as they crossed the open spaces the yataghans and the gun-barrels threw back the brilliant moon-rays in flashes of pale blue flame.

Far beneath, the still valley slumbered under a light veil of mist, through which shone faintly the silvered glint of the river. On all sides tumbled the rough shoulders of the hills, their crests rimmed with white fire, and shadows of wondrous depths upon their breasts. Over the ridge swept the high wind in clear, cold blasts.

The route led along the top of the hill, then down a bare slope to the stony bed of a torrential stream, the water of which was very low and could be seen only in broad, standing pools. The gulley worn by the cataract was over one hundred yards in width and choked with masses of loose rock and stone. Beyond it the bank rose steeply to meet the heavy forest, and a little distance down-stream there was a rift between the hills, which marked the course of the trail to Rascia.

As Ishmi Bey was indicating this opening to Sir James, there suddenly emerged from the gloom of the forest a little squad of horsemen, which rode out into the full light of the moon, where it halted as if to reconnoitre.

The hermit reined his pony sharply backwards under the crest of the hill, and Sir James did likewise.

"Who are those men?" whispered Ishmi Bey. "Our own scouts were unmounted. Let us watch for a moment."

The Shkipetari were springing up all about them. Ishmi Bey turned and gave a sharp order in the guttural Gegh dialect spoken by the tribes who live north of the River Shkumbi. The words were passed quickly from mouth to mouth, and the tribesmen sank to earth, then crawled up to peer down into the valley beneath.

The horsemen had disappeared against the shadow of the forest. A few moments later they came into sight again in the river-bottom,



dismounted, and leading their horses among the stones. Presently they passed under the near bank and were lost to view, to reappear immediately at the foot of the slope. Here they paused, as if in consultation, and seemed to scan the ridge above. Perhaps some instinct warned them of the ambush spread along its summit, for they seemed unwilling to proceed. They were still standing there, inky blotches against the brilliant background, when a dark column began to emerge from the forest across the valley.

A guttural whisper arose from the Shkipetari; its sibilant undertone was caught up in the fierce gusts of wind and swept from mouth to mouth. Ishmi Bey, crouching beside Sir James, turned his head, and his white teeth shone through his heavy beard.

"The Prince!" he muttered in French. "He has heard that the Shkipetari were mustering to attack him at Rascia, and has decided to strike first himself at Dakabar!"

Across the river the dark column crawled like a thick, black serpent from the forest, turned to the left, and disappeared again in the sightless shadows which cloaked the rim of the bank. A troop of cavalry had appeared and apparently halted, when a column of infantry followed and likewise disappeared.

"It is but a mouthful for the Shkipetari," whispered Ishmi Bey exultantly. "There are perhaps fifty horsemen and twice that number of foot, while we are over five hundred strong. We will strike when the cavalry is crossing the river-bed."

He hurried off in search of Sheik Izzat, and a moment later the two dark figures could be seen flitting here and there among the mountaineers.

At the foot of the slope the horsemen forming the advance guard had remounted and were riding slowly up the hill. At the same time the forward files of the cavalry came out of a gulley in the opposite bank, leading their horses among the boulders and débris, until presently the entire column was in the river-bed. The scouts were advancing slowly and as if in doubt, for those in ambush could see the white moonlight on their faces as they turned them continually upward.

The six doomed men were within fifty yards of the summit when the Sheik Izzat sprang suddenly to his feet and with a savage scream waved his yataghan aloft. His cry was lost in the crash of a volley, the detonation of which was whirled on high and swept away on the gusty winds. Down went horses and riders, a struggling heap. Up rose the Shkipetari, but even more quickly Ishmi Bey had sprung in front of them and was waving them back with frantic words and furious gestures.

For a moment they paused. Ishmi Bey, a mad, whirling figure in the moonlight, poured out a frenzied torrent of speech. A few of

the Shkipetari sprang forward, but the hermit, giant that he was, seized them by the shoulders and flung them back. Then Sheik Izzat, the blade of his yataghan a glittering circle over his head, plunged down the slope, howling furiously. With a roar, the Shkipetari were on and after him.

Ishmi Bey, who had been overthrown by the rush, sprang to his feet and shook his clenched fists with a gesture of passionate despair. He turned toward Sir James and cried out something which Dallas could not hear. But the Englishman had understood. He looked at his friend with a pale and horror-stricken face.

"My God!" he cried. "It is not the Prince at all! *Those are Turkish troops!*"

Silent and dismayed, they watched the furious combat in the valley beneath. Although more than doubly outnumbered, surprised, and taken at a disadvantage, the Turkish *hamdié* was not thrown into confusion. Well drilled, well disciplined, well officered, and well armed, the Shkipetari could not have found in all the country a more difficult mouthful to swallow than the Turkish mounted militia.

At the first wild clamor and volley from the hill-top, there had been a quick, sharp order, and in the two minutes which it took the tribesmen to reach the foot of the hill the troopers had unslung their carbines, released their horses, and were deployed among the rocks. At the same moment the company of infantry, which was marching in column of fours and hidden in the shadow of the woods, was halted, then advanced in line of skirmishers along the farther bank, so that when the Shkipetari reached the water-course, they ran pell-mell into a very nasty trap. Had they possessed any leadership or tactics, they might have halted and deployed on their own bank, when they could have engaged the enemy under fire and effected considerable damage. But, frenzied as they were, when once started, there was no holding them. Down they poured into the water-course, yataghan in hand, only to be met by a volley at point-blank range from Turkish Mausers in the hands of marksmen who needed nothing better than the brilliant moonlight.

But although a number fell, the tribesmen did not waver. Into the rocks they leaped, agile as otter hounds and just as fierce. And here the slaughter began. For the yataghan, although an admirable weapon when opposed to steel, stands little chance against a bullet, and it was steel-jacketed lead at close range with which the troopers fed them. Then after the first few moments of scattering fire, finding nothing at which to aim in the leaping, darting figures, here came the infantry, charging down the bank with fixed bayonets, when the engagement promptly broke into a series of furious hand-to-hand combats.

If the Shkipetari came to recognize their mistake in the identity

of their foe, they did not seek to remedy it. The battle-rage had seized them, and the Turks themselves, though not the folk whom they had come to seek, were their hereditary enemies. Straight into the muzzles of the rifles rushed the Albanians, and in the bright light of the moon the watchers on the hill-top were witnesses to acts of the most desperate fury. Here a screaming mountaineer took a bullet through the body at a range of two yards, only to rush in and beat aside the soldier's rifle and cut him down with the yataghan; near him an Albanian with a bayonet through his vitals was striving to reach with a thrust of his long, sinewy arm the man who held it. Wounded Shkipetari crawled on hands and knees to get within striking distance of a foe, praying only to kill one man before death overtook them.

Yet for all of their frenzied fighting, the injury inflicted by the Shkipetari was but very slight, while that which they suffered was terrific. In less time than it takes to tell, a third of them were down, and then, as though recognizing the hopelessness of the struggle, the tribesmen suddenly lost heart and the place was filled with flying figures, retreating not back in the direction whence they had come, but on down the water-course, toward a spot where the forest grew to the edge of the bank. A moment later they had melted into the sheltering woods, leaving only their dead and dying and a few dark figures crawling away to hide in recesses among the rocks.

Sir James turned to Dallas a face which was drawn and tense.

"How do you feel?"

"Rather sick. And you?"

"What a beastly shame! That infernal fool of a sheik!"

Ishmi Bey, crouching in front of them, rose to his feet.

"What can one do with madmen?" he asked, throwing out his hands. "I had just recognized the uniform of the *hamdié* when Sheik Izzat gave the order to fire. Come, my friends, we must go. If we are found here, we shall be shot."

They crawled back over the ridge, remounted their ponies, and rode in silence back down the trail. At the end of an hour the road led out upon a wind-swept ridge, and they saw below them the village of Dakabar.

"The work of to-night is an example of the guile of Prince Emilio," said Ishmi Bey bitterly, as they rode down the steep hillside. "He heard of the coming of the Shkipetari and sent word of it to the nearest Turkish *caracol*. Now the work has been done for him at no cost, and we may expect to see him here at Dakabar with a band of his Serbs!"

The house of the Lady Thalia was situated on a thickly wooded plateau a little above the village, and was surrounded by a park. As

the four men rode in through the massive gates, they saw at the far end of the straight avenue several horses standing in the bright patch of moonlight in front of the main entrance to the house.

"Halt," said Ishmi Bey, under his breath.

They drew rein and peered down the dark, tunnelled driveways. Overhead the high wind was roaring through the tree-tops, but the foliage was still thick enough to screen the light of the moon.

"Who can that be?" whispered Sir James.

"I do not know," answered the hermit. "Perhaps it is the Prince himself. Let us go forward quietly."

They advanced cautiously. Almost at the end of the drive they again drew rein.

In front of the door were six horses, saddled and bridled, and held by three men. Suddenly one of the animals raised its head and whinnied, when, before he could prevent it, Dallas's mount neighed in answer.

The three unmounted men turned quickly and stared down the drive. Then one of them handed his reins to a comrade, ran up the steps, and rapped sharply on the big oaken door. Immediately it was swung open, showing a lighted interior, and a moment later a short, thick-set figure stepped across the threshold and stood for a moment in the full blaze of the moon.

Dallas heard at his elbow a quick, indrawn breath and turned to see Ishmi Bey, his head thrust forward like a hound in leash.

"The Prince!" growled the hermit, and drew his yataghan.

Dallas leaned toward Sir James. "It is Emilio," he whispered. "He has come for Thalia!"

Sir James's answer was to draw his own blade. He turned to Ishmi Bey.

"There are only six of them!" said he. "Let's make a rush!"

"Hold on!" said Dallas. "This is pistol work, James!"

"Steel for me! Ready, Connors?"

"Nivir more so, sorr!" growled the Irishman, and drew his heavy revolver.

"Then come on!"

The gravel churned under the ponies' hoofs as they sprang forward. Out of the shadow they flew, neck and neck, and dashed across the lighted space. A cry burst from the Prince, and they saw him snatch a pistol from his belt. The horses held by the two troopers, frightened by the crash of hoofs, tugged violently backward, dragging the men after them.

At the first alarm two more men had appeared in the wide open doorway. The Prince raised his weapon and fired. At the foot of the steps Dallas reined in with a jerk and began to shoot from the saddle.

"*Pank! pank! pank!*" barked the deadly automatic arm, and one of the men beside the Prince pitched forward and came head first down into the road. But Dallas's horse, frightened at the reports, was fighting to bolt, and the other shots flew wide. Ishmi Bey was on his feet and leaping for the steps. Connors had killed one guard and wounded the other, but Sir James's pony, struck by a bullet from the Prince's weapon, had reared and fallen backward across his rider, pinning him to the ground.

Dallas swung from the saddle and rushed after the hermit, and Connors, pausing to haul Sir James from under his horse, followed him. At the top of the steps the man beside the Prince thrust his revolver almost against the broad chest of Ishmi Bey and fired, then leaped back across the threshold, dragging the Prince after him, and swung to the heavy door. But Ishmi Bey, who had reeled backward when shot, recovered himself, and, lurching forward, thrust the blade of his yataghan between the door and the jamb, when all four men threw their weights against it. Slowly it gave, to the noise of scuffling feet within; then a blade licked out through the aperture, and Connors dropped with an oath and went rolling down the steps.

"Stand clear!" panted Dallas, and, drawing back, fired two shots through the oak panel. At the same moment the door swung violently open and they burst into the room.

Two thundering reports roared out, and Ishmi Bey staggered back against the wall. A swarthy man sprang at Sir James with a wicked slash of a cavalry sabre, but the Englishman caught the blow on his yataghan, then thrust his antagonist through the body. Dallas, peering under the smoke, saw the Prince and another man standing behind a large table in the middle of the room. He fired quickly into the smoke and saw the man at the Prince's elbow fall. Then the Prince himself fired, and Dallas felt the wind of the bullet on his cheek. At the same moment Ishmi Bey sprang forward, when the Prince turned and ran to a door at the far end of the hall. With his hand on the latch the hermit overtook him, driving his yataghan so violently between the Prince's shoulders that the blade transfixing the panel of the door.

At Dallas's right there rose the clash and clatter of steel, and he turned to see Sir James engaged with a man who had been hiding behind the arras at the other end of the hall. The room was dimly lighted by three lamps, but the farther recesses were buried in shadow, and as Dallas glanced warily about his quick eye was caught by a moving figure in one of these. His deadly weapon flew up, and even as it did so a scream from Sir James's antagonist told that the duel was finished. Simultaneously there boomed out from the lower end of the hall a harsh and raucous voice:

"Don't shoot! It vas I—Rosenthal—and the ladies!"

Dallas lowered his weapon, staring in amazement through the heavy, suffocating smoke. Sir James was leaning against the table, looking in the same direction, his breath coming in gasps, and a thin red stream running from the point of his yataghan. At the end of the hall lay the bodies of Ishmi Bey and the Prince Emilio, whose death struggle had snapped the blade which transfixed him. Dallas crouched lower to peer under the blinding smoke.

In the extreme corner of the room the huge bulk of the Jew was dimly defined through the vaporous gloom. He was standing erect, his big arms spread out, his hands braced against the wall on either side. As the two men stared, the Jew, who had been looking cautiously to right and left, let his arms drop to his side and stepped forward, when there appeared to their astonished eyes the dark-clad figures of the Lady Thalia and the Countess Paula Rubitzki.

"You can come oudt, ladies," said Rosenthal. "It is all ofer."

"Upon my word!" gasped Sir James. "Have you been there all the time?"

"Yes, Sir Chames. There vas no time to get oudt of the vay; you came so quickly. I vas afraid the ladies might get shootet, so I pushed them into the corner and stood in fr'r'ont of them. *Mein Gott*, a bullet went into the wall an inch from my head. I can see not'ing for the plaster in my eyes."

"Good for you," grunted Dallas.

The two girls came forward shrinkingly, their faces very pale and their eyes wide with horror, for the room was a smoke-filled shambles.

"Where's Connors?" asked Sir James suddenly.

"He got a sword-thrust," said Dallas, "and rolled down the steps as we came in."

Sir James went quickly out. The others, dazed by the violence through which they had just passed, stood for an instant regarding one another in silence. Then Dallas started on a tour of inspection, accompanied by Rosenthal, whose massive head was still swathed in bandages.

Ishmi Bey and the Prince were both quite dead; so was the man at whom Dallas had fired, while the two victims of Sir James's yataghan appeared to be dying, both having been run through the chest.

"*Sapristi!*" said Rosenthal. "How far hate will take a man! Especially when he is a holy man. Here is Ishmi Bey with four bullet-holes in his body, one of them over the heart; and yet he has lived to kill the Prince."

As he spoke, Sir James entered the room. The Englishman's eyes were brimming over, and his face was pale and drawn.

"Dead?" asked Dallas.



Sir James could only nod. Followed by Rosenthal, Dallas hurried out of the house. They found the brave Irishman lying on his back at the foot of the steps, stone dead, his revolver still clenched in his hand.

As they reëntered, Dallas paused on the threshold. Sir James had sunk into a chair, his elbows on the table, his chin on his knuckles, staring into vacancy. Beside him stood Paula, her hand resting on his shoulder. Dallas looked and suddenly understood. His gray eyes opened very wide. He stepped quickly to his friend.

"James, old chap, I am sorry."

Rosenthal's heavy voice broke the silence which followed.

"Where are the Shkipetari? What happened you?"

In a few brief words Dallas told the Jew of what had befallen the Albanians. Rosenthal's face grew very grave.

"*Sapristi!* Ve must get oudt of here at vonce. The Turks vill hold Thalia responsible. Come, Sir Chames, let us bury your man and get away. Thalia, find your servants and haf them saddle some horses. Ve must lose no time to get across the border into Montenegro!"

A soft breeze from the Adriatic sighed and whispered through the lofty tops of the great pines which rose straight and dark and solemn from the brim of the high plateau. The yellow moon, which two nights before had looked down, cold and bright and merciless, upon the slaughter of the Shkipetari, now shone with a fervor almost caressing in its luscious warmth, tempered by the soft air from the sea.

Far below the rolling hills swelled away to infinity, bathed in luminous disorder, their crests converted into islands of enchantment, rising from the sea of mist which filled the valleys.

Side by side, at the foot of one of the big forest sentinels, Dallas and the Lady Thalia sat upon the carpet of aromatic pine-needles and looked out upon the moonlit wilderness. Not far beneath them on the mountain-side there sparkled a light or two from the little inn where the refugees had halted for the night.

Presently Dallas spoke, his voice subdued to the murmur of the gentle breeze in the tree-tops, high above their heads.

"Dear, to-morrow you will have to say good-by to your savage mountains. Cettinjé is over there"—he pointed toward the vague distance before them.

"Am I never to see my hills again, Stephen?" asked the girl.

"It's hard to tell, sweetheart. Perhaps some day we may come back for a visit. But your home is going to be very far away from them."

"Where, dearest?"

"In my own country, Thalia. I've been too long away. We

Americans are not built for the silly, aimless life that I've been leading; we are meant for strife and action and keen effort."

"You are." She nestled closer.

"I'm afraid," said Dallas, "that I'm not as civilized as I thought I was. Do you know, dear, I have never felt so fit and happy in my life as I have back there in your hills. The hardship and the danger and all seemed to fill some long-felt want. I could never go back to the insipid life in Paris, after this!"

"I'm glad, Stephen. I am not so very tame myself, you know!" She laughed caressingly, and took his hand in both of hers. "We're well mated, are n't we, dear?"

He drew her to him and held her there, his lips resting against her cheek.

"I am afraid that we are two savages, dear. Your fathers were Shkipetari and spent their time in carving the Turks with their yataghans. Mine were Texas Rangers and spent *their* time in carving up Greasers with bowie-knives. There's not much to choose! Then you and I come along, and are sent to school in France and told to be polite. And at the very first chance we trot out and shoot up the country as naturally and joyfully as if we had been taught to do it! But it shows me where I really belong; and of course you belong with me."

Thalia seized his wrists and turned to stare at him with large and startled eyes.

"Do you mean that you are going back to America to fight with—what do you call them—Greasers? And Indians, perhaps? Oh, no, no, Stephen! What if you should be killed?"

Dallas took her in his arms. "No, darling," said he. "Those days are past. We are going to be married and live in a peaceful country enough, but one where a man does a man's work—and makes other men do it, too! I don't know what mine will be; but I have inherited big responsibilities, dear—railroads and factories and great tracts of half-savage country to be developed—and I am going back to develop it—and myself! And you shall help!"

"I shall try, dear." Thalia's voice was tremulous. "Do you think that I can really help? And, oh, Stephen"—a sob rose in her throat—"will you love me always and truly, when you have me all alone in that big, far-away country of yours?" She hid her face in his chest.

Dallas clasped her in his arms, then raised her face, and kissed her warm, trembling lips.

"Thalia, darling! If you only knew!" he whispered. "I keep asking myself what I have ever done to deserve such a woman! Resolute, cheerful, fearless, and tender. Ah, my dear, if you only knew!"

Her arms tightened about his neck, her face crushed to his. But

the night-wind from the valley seemed to whisper to the murmuring pines:

"Truly, and always!"

"As peace advocates who came to this country to help to prevent bloodshed," said Sir James a few nights later, as he and Dallas watched the lights of Cetinje dwindling over the taffrail of the steamer, "it strikes me that we have proved pretty gorgeous failures, Stephen. Poor old Connors!" He caught his breath and stared moodily into the sea.

"Don't take it so much to heart, James. Connors was a soldier, and he died a soldier's death. He is much happier than he would be if you had been the one to get that thrust through the heart."

"But I got him into it. It was his loyalty to me. Oh, hang it all, why could n't it have been I?"

"Because, my son, the high gods have chosen you to marry Paula Rubitzki, and muzzle the hounds of the Secret Service, just as they selected me to marry Thalia—for what merit of mine, I am sure I don't know!"

"Perhaps Thalia does. And I say, Stephen, it *was* a ripping little fight."

There was a hoarse chuckle from the door of the smoking-room behind them, and Rosenthal's huge bulk obscured the bright light from within.

"Bah!" said he. "But you Anglo-Saxons will never get civilized! You can t'ink of not'ing but fighting. Some day when you are older you vill understand, like me, vat foolish boys you haf been."

"At least, we did what we set out to do, Baron," said Sir James.

"Yes, and a great deal more." Rosenthal's harsh laugh ripped its way through the peaceful night. "And now you are to be married, and happy like me, and I am fery glad, because it makes me feel as if my forty t'ousand pounds had not been t'rown away."

Two white-clad figures appeared at the head of the after companion-way, and Dallas, whose eyes had not strayed far from that part of the deck, turned quickly on his heel.

Sir James thrust himself back from the rail. "We are going to watch the moon-rise," said he to the Baron.

"Yes? Then I vill vish you good-night."

Rosenthal looked after the two young men, and a deep laugh rumbled in his chest.

"*Sapristi!*" he muttered to himself. "Isidor Rosenthal has played many parts, but he has never learned to be a chaperon. Such foolish boys!" he muttered. "But not so foolish, after all."

And he turned to the cheerful glare of the smoking-room.

# THE MARKETS OF PARIS

*By Mrs. John Van Vorst*

Author of "Letters to Women in Love," "Babsy's Daughter," etc.

MARKETING has ever been an important question. On certain occasions it has assumed the formidable aspect of the rock upon which young married couples have shipwrecked. At other times it has exercised the subtle influence over man which leads us to affirm that the road to his heart is through his palate.

Marketing is a formidable affair.

Whether well done, ill done; whether done with a wide open purse or with twopence wrapped up in the corner of a pocket-handkerchief; whether done hastily and insufficiently or succulently and gluttonously,—it must be done, and done over, and done again to-morrow, and every kind of done except done with. Marketing is never done with, and it is this everlasting aspect of food-buying which gives it a life that is worth studying. The forest tree survives many generations, but it may be in absolute solitude that it comes to old age, unfrequented by man. The market-place which endures from century to century sees the multitude, the populace, the little village crowd, or the great municipal throng flock to its galleries year after year, with a change in all circumstances that concern them except that all important one of buying food.

And though the actual manner of serving food may vary constantly, it is quite correct to say that man has always dined; sometimes at two o'clock, sometimes at eight; sometimes with fingers, sometimes with forks. The average Englishman of the present times begins his day with a cup of tea, which he drinks before getting up. At nine he breakfasts heartily with bacon and eggs, fish and coffee, muffins and jam. At two he has a substantial luncheon served in courses, with a roast and an entrée; at five he partakes of a copious tea, with cake and bread; at eight or half-past he seriously dines, and if, during the later evening, he has been to the theatre, he regales himself with a frugal bite—whiskey and a sandwich perhaps—if at home. When he is entertaining or being entertained, of course, his midnight supper is likely to be more substantial.

The Frenchman is more abstemious: he eats his tea and toast

(or his *café au lait* or chocolate if he be a *bourgeois*) in the early morning; breakfasts upon eggs, meat, and a vegetable at half-past twelve (in the provinces at eleven and even half-past ten), and at half-past seven or eight o'clock he has a good dinner, with half a dozen courses and one or two good wines.

Napoleon refused to spend more than ten minutes at table, and his repasts were spread out in an enormous variety of cold dishes, from which he partook as he pleased, while only the hot roast was passed.

So every man his tastes; and if certain women have given their names to roses and carnations, many are the dukes and princes who have let some special dish be called for them: *à la Soubise*, *à la Morny*, *à la Parmentier*, etc.

The source from which the dinner, whatever it may be, emanates in Paris is the *Halles*, a covered market-place back of the church Saint Eustache, and not far from the Rue de Rivoli. It dates from the twelfth century, having been built in 1137, and its name has an even older origin, as the covered gallery which surrounded the forum of the Roman town, under which the small shops were sheltered, was called a hall, or *halle*.

The Paris *Halles*, or Central Markets, cover a surface of fifty-nine thousand yards. One hundred million pounds of meat are sold there in a year, forty-four million pounds of chicken, and a number equally appalling of bushels of potatoes and vegetables, of pounds of fish and butter, of dozens of eggs. Aside from the people who come to buy at the *Halles Centrales*, and the vast number of hotels and institutions which provide themselves with food at this source, there are twenty-nine smaller markets held in the different quarters of Paris every day, which have no other supply than the *Halles*. The reason for serving themselves thus through an intermediary instead of applying directly to the suburban trucksters and the coastwise fishermen is that thereby are avoided the complications involved by the laws of hygiene, which are very strict in Paris. Every particle of food admitted to the counters of the *Dames des Halles* must first have been inspected and judged fit for the human palate, by a commission who hold their sésances between midnight and three in the morning, performing test experiments upon hungry guinea-pigs! The effects no doubt prove fatal rather often upon these poor "tasters," for there are four hundred and forty thousand pounds of meat seized every year and destroyed with quick-lime, while an equal amount of sea fish is cast to destruction, together with fifteen thousand pounds of fresh water fish, thousands of lobsters, and, last as always in the procession, one hundred and ninety thousand snails!

The men who accomplish the difficult task of unloading the wagons of food as they arrive from the railroad are appointed to their positions

by the *Préfet of Police*. He makes no further tax upon them morally and physically than that they shall be honest, and able to carry from one end to the other of the market a load weighing *two hundred and forty pounds*! For this formidably hard "job" the remuneration is never less than six hundred dollars, and attains to as much as one thousand dollars, a year.

So much for the technical side of the meat and vegetables that nourish Paris. The picturesque side is more alluring. It begins to show itself about midnight. As one drives homeward from the opera, up the Champs Elysées, one meets an intermittent procession of two-wheeled carts drawn by strong, healthy horses walking at a slow pace and without direction, for the driver has fallen asleep on his high-piled load of vegetables—sometimes a mass of snowy onions, sometimes a wall of orange carrots, sometimes a soft bank of green lettuce leaves. These wagons arrive toward two o'clock at the *Halles*, where their contents are unloaded and sold off at auction to the market-women. On the sidewalk from six until eight o'clock there is a retail sale carried on of the "green goods," which on the stroke of eight must all have vanished from sight. This very early market has no especial interest in itself, but the circumstances which because of it necessitate the night life at the *Halles* are, as we shall see, the cause and occasion of all the dramatic and tragic incidents that occur—and they are many—in the market annals of Paris.

Each "*poste*," or "stand," under the covered hall has its "lady guardian," or *dame gardeuse*. According to the note which has most appealed to her comrades in her personality or occupation, she receives a nickname. She is *Marie au beurre* (Butter Mary) or *Jambes de Bois* (Wooden Legs) or *Alice au lard* (Bacon Alice) or *Lucie aux plantes* or, if she be irresistible, simply "*La Belle de Nuit*" (The Night Beauty).

Our expression, "she looks like a market-woman," is more or less derogatory, compromising for the subject in question. And, to tell the truth, the "*Dame de la Halle*" has not an over-elegant appearance. Yet there is a certain aristocracy among these women, a certain understanding of the advantages which the right of succession and acquired experience imply.

No money can buy these stands, or "*postes*," which are handed down by right of succession from mother to daughter. If the stout—for she is always stout—*Marie au beurre* have the misfortune to grow old without direct female descendants, her *poste*—oh, calamity!—must be given over to some niece or sister.

Perhaps it is this strict observance of the inheritance laws which has made the *Dames des Halles* so proverbially enthusiastic about the royal family of France. They have, these market-women, aristocratic prejudices, inclinations, and privileges. For centuries it was their



right on happy anniversaries—a royal marriage, a victory over the enemy's armies, the birth of a royal prince—to compliment the king and queen. On New Year's Day a chosen delegation was permitted to carry a bouquet to the royal palace at Versailles, or to the Louvre. Once the "*Dames*" had penetrated to the royal presence, they knelt down and made their compliments in a humble attitude. Then a dinner was offered to them, over which one of the highest officers in the king's household presided. At the free representation given several times a year at the Opéra, Opéra Comique, and Comédie Française, the *Dames des Halles* were offered the courtesy of the royal box.

In spite of all these good graces bestowed upon them, their inclination for the royalty proved not as deep an instinct as that of self-preservation at the opening of the Revolution. Every one remembers their impassioned conduct on the fifth and sixth of October. With General Lafayette among them, they marched out over twelve miles of road from Paris to Versailles, and then before the Chateau, in the Marble Court, they clamored like wild women for the *Boulangier*, the *Boulangère*, and the "*Petit Matron*," which was their vulgarly ironical manner of indicating Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and the little Dauphin.

But when the Revolution was over and an emperor had again taken possession of the French, the *Dames des Halles* reverted to their former tradition; they called upon and were received by Napoleon I. in the Tuileries. And after the *coup d'état* of December 2, Napoleon III., the "self-made emperor," gave them a splendid ball. Now when any of the should-be rejoicing family of Orléanists pass through Paris the *Dames des Halles* are allowed to precipitate themselves, and to kneel and to compliment, and to present the bouquet.

The only soup-house or restaurant in Paris which is permitted to remain open all night is at the *Halles*, and the reason for its existence is the following: A regulation made by law and strictly observed by the police of Paris prevents any café or restaurant remaining open after two o'clock in the morning. Not only at this hour are the lowest of the "*bouges*," or tenth-rate cafés (which correspond to the Anglo-Saxon saloon), obliged to empty their miserable patrons into the street, but these same wretches, be they homeless and without credit in the free night lodging-houses, are not permitted to make themselves a temporary couch on one of the park benches, or upon the seats that are scattered along the Parisian avenues. They are not even granted shelter under the bridges on the banks of the Seine, for here as elsewhere the policeman finds them out and sends them on their way, to wander eastward toward the morning light. At dawn, in winter or in summer, they may again seat themselves where they will. Doubtless such rigorous rules are made with the endeavor to discourage tramp-

dom. To walk the streets until two in the morning on cold winter nights is hardly an experience that allures one to the profession of the homeless. The government, however, no matter how merciless, makes one generous exception to this law: it has been recognized a necessity at the *Halles* to have an all-night café for the "*porteurs*" and unloaders, the out-of-town traffickers who work there during nocturnal hours without interruption. Any one may patronize this late restaurant, and the youths of golden Bohemia who have danced or made "*la Noce*" into the wee small hours, stop at the market for a bowl of *soupe à l'ail* or a cup of coffee toward dawn. Alphonse Daudet, in his "*Trente Ans de Paris*," relates in a most charming manner his first experience, as a very young man, in breakfasting at the *Halles* after having made "a night of it."

The errand boys, or *garçons des Halles*—under twenty years of age, all of them—are a rather rough lot, of the sort who would die for a friend, but who would just as easily kill some one else for him.

Once in the late summer, when the "season" was over and Paris was "deserted" for those who find its charm to lie in its worldly throngs, I came unexpectedly upon an obscure tragedy which had ended in the death of a certain "*garçon des Halles*." Strolling along the river under the shade of the sycamore trees, I found my recollection of a certain angel Gabriel in the tower of Notre Dame to be drawing me irresistibly back to the *Parvis*, prepared to stand and gaze for a time at the beauty which has traversed generations unmodified. But suddenly a more actual and living beauty attracted me—a girl of twenty, without a hat, in a short gingham frock, with a *crêpe de chine* shawl thrown over her shoulders, her dark hair done low on her neck. She walked with the rapid step of one whose dominant emotion makes her oblivious of all else but the intensity of feeling which impels her toward some end. With her were another girl and a very much older woman, dressed in black, with a small bonnet on her head. The young girl held in her arms a bunch of flowers. And these blossoms, merely by the way they were arranged, and the manner in which they were carried, expressed a grief. Flowers are so easily the accompaniment of festivity, the tribute to some occasion of merry-making, some anniversary of joy. But this bouquet was sinister. It bore the rigid, white aspect of the floral pieces which are offered as a token of parting to those who go on the long, long way.

I followed the girl, who walked rapidly and with the poise of a queen, down the broad street which passes back of Notre Dame, and there on the corner I saw her pause with her companions in front of a café where a group had assembled, a group in black, a group which was the bearer also of other bouquets whose aspect was funereal. Following the gaze of these people, who exchanged embraces while their

eyes remained fixed upon a certain spot, I caught sight, with a swift pang, of the small, low building that stood opposite the café: it was the Morgue. There before the threshold stood a small, meagre hearse of the type which cries out poverty. The sides were draped in white—this emblem of a should-be innocence attributed to all those whom death attacks before they reach the age of twenty-one. For whom did it wait, this narrow, dismal carriage of the dead? For whom did they wait, these men and these women who, hatless and dressed as the very poor are clad, had nevertheless brought flowers and wreaths in tribute to one they loved?

I approached the little flight of steps leading to the "*chambre mortuaire*" in this most sinister of spots. Who was it, who was to be buried thus, without family, without rites of any sort, I asked. And the guardian responded:

"He was a young fellow of twenty—*un garçon des Halles*. He worked at night in the big Central Markets as errand boy. One morning they found him dead. Suicide or murder? No one could tell. The law is ready to take up the matter, but no complaint has been addressed. This young man belonged to a band. He had no family, but his band will avenge him." He showed with a gesture the group who stood over by the door of the café. "They need no recourse to the law. When some night dark enough arrives they will know how and where to drive the knife which will put a swift end to the life of him who, for some jealous reason, has thus despatched into another world the poor young boy of the *Halles*."

While the guardian was speaking, the group of mourners had moved over from the café porch to the sidewalk, where the hearse was stationed. They placed their farewell tributes upon the narrow limits which served as resting-place for one whom they had cherished.

And on the wreaths I read repeatedly the salutation, "To our friend." On one wreath alone, larger than all the rest, I spelled out the letters: "To my friend" (*A mon ami*). Thus did this simple unknown *garçon des Halles*, without a family, possess not only acquaintances who mourned his death, but one among his friends there was who deplored that final parting as the great separation which leaves us aghast, with that agony of heart that cries out against the cruelty of irrevocable absence and the haunting doubt as to a future reunion.

Women of the *Halles*, and men of the *Halles*, be they but the simplest pack carriers, are, like the rich and the very rich, and the poor and the very poor,—human, all of them. Circumstances alter the settings of our lives, but no matter what the class to which we belong, no matter what the benefits or miseries with which chance has accompanied our setting, our joy and our suffering, given our relative capacities, are the same all the world over in kind and in degree.

# GRANDFATHER BIXBY, NURSE

*By Mary Roberts Rinehart*

Author of "Seven Days," "The Man in Lower Ten," etc.

"THE coast is clear," read Grandfather Bixby drowsily.  
"Send two trusty scouts to the cave—"

"Grandpa," said the little boy on the bed, suddenly, "what did you have for dinner?"

"—and roll the casks of provisions beyond reach of the waves." A brushwood fire was soon burning, and from it proceeded an appetizing odor of broiling fish. The castaways—"

"Grandpa!" The boy's tone was more insistent. "What *did* you have for dinner?"

Grandfather Bixby was wide awake now.

"Dinner!" he exclaimed, as if he heard for the first time. He was thinking hard. "Why, nothing much, Dicky. Meat and potatoes—I forget what else."

"It smelled like chocolate pudding," said Dicky wistfully. "And when Norah came up to sit with me while you were at dinner, she said it *was* chocolate pudding."

"Norah's a fool," snapped Grandfather Bixby, putting down his glasses irritably. "There may have been pudding, but it was n't good pudding, I can tell you that."

"It does n't have to be very good for me to like it. Grandpa, were you ever sick on the Fourth of July?"

"Never was well," maintained the old gentleman stoutly. "Seems to me, when I look back, I 'most always had the mumps or the measles or something. I was a regular Fourth of July croaker."

Dicky eyed his grandfather suspiciously, but the wrinkled face above the gray dressing-gown was entirely serious. Indeed, Grandfather Bixby, embarking on a sea of mendacity, felt to the full the inexpertness which resulted from seventy years of honesty. To cover his confusion, he rearranged with care the huge American flag that had been draped over the foot of the sick-bed, and stepped back to inspect the result.

"I tell you, it's fine, Dicky," he said. "What with that string of

fire-crackers across the foot of the bed, and the flag, and a Roman candle at every corner, you look like a regiment going into action."

"Like a battle-ship," the child supplemented gleefully. "Like father's ship. You're the Admiral, and I'm the Captain. Last Fourth of July father took me to the park, and a rocket-stick came down—biff!—and made a hole in his hat and cut his head a little. Do you remember? And how mother was so scared—for him, you know—that she cried? Grandpa, *when* is my father coming back?"

Grandfather Bixby busied himself at the window, without answering. When the child repeated the question, however, he turned around as if he had just heard.

"Your father?" he repeated to gain time. "Why, he'll be back some time, Dicky. You settle down now; your mother won't let me look after you again if you don't keep quiet."

"But Norah says he won't be back," Dicky persisted. "She said I had lost the best father in the world. My feet got all cold, and I said, 'Was he killed in a battle?' and she said, 'No, he was n't dead, and such a fine-looking young man, too.'"

He stopped, out of breath, and, fortunately for the old man's twitching face, his attention was at that moment distracted. Grandfather Bixby had taken a covered jelly-glass from a tin pail of ice on the window-sill, and held it up for the youngster's eyes to feast on.

"Ice-cream!" he exclaimed, looking around over his glasses for a spoon. "A present from the drug-store man at the corner. He said he missed his best customer." He pulled a chair beside the bed and slipped a pillow under Dicky's head. "I reckon your mother and the doctor would n't object to a little ice-cream."

The first spoonful, guided by his shaking old hand, missed the boy's open mouth and slid into the hollow of his neck, to be mopped up by Grandfather Bixby's pipe-scented handkerchief. The next half-dozen reached their proper destination in short order; then Dicky turned away his head.

"I can't chew it," he explained in a thin but polite voice. "When I shut my teeth it is n't there. If father was here, he would make that old doctor give me something to eat. Everybody does what father says—but mother. She's allowed to do what she likes."

The old man scraped down the cream from the sides of the glass, and his corded fingers were tremulous.

"I guess that's it, Dicky boy," he said. "Your mother's always been allowed to do what she likes, and that is n't good for anybody. Not that it has spoiled her," he supplemented, with hasty loyalty.

The white china clock with the blue windmills on it ticked away cheerfully on the mantel; beside it stood a small locomotive, a wooden mule, and a life-like cow, with a space in her back that lifted out and

allowed milk to be poured in, to be milked out later into diminutive pails. And in a silver frame, surmounted by a blue paper rose which Dicky had made at Kindergarten, was the picture of a young man in a uniform.

Grandfather Bixby stirred the ice-cream into a slushy mass, and looked at the picture. He had never had a son, and this tall young navy officer had been very dear to him. And now he was on the high seas and Helen would not speak of him, although she left his picture in the nursery—for Dicky.

The clock ticked on, and Grandfather Bixby's head drooped on his breast. Then—

"They said perhaps I might have toast to-morrow," came Dicky's voice. "It's almost to-morrow now, or it will be in three hours."

"Three hours and fifteen minutes," said Grandfather Bixby, looking at the clock. "What would your mother say, if she came home and found crumbs in the bed, and your temperature up in the end of the thermometer again?"

"Just a little piece!"

"Ice-cream and toast, and you with nothing but beef tea for six weeks!" But he was plainly wavering. The boy pursued his advantage ruthlessly.

"When you were sick," he pleaded, "did n't I bring you the paper every morning? When you were n't allowed to read?"

Grandfather Bixby looked around him helplessly: then he got up and tied the cord of his dressing-gown.

"You know what your mother would say. I would never hear the end of it," he protested. "Where do they keep the bread?"

After he had gone down the stairs, Dicky lay back with a contented sigh. The window was open, and often there darted across the black emptiness of the night outside a weird streak of golden fire—the stem of some vast glittering plant whose flowering blossom of red and green lights was beyond and above the boy's vision. Now and then, however, one of the fiery petals dropped lower than its fellows, and, swaying with the air, fell slowly, slowly, past.

The smaller noises of the day were gone: only an occasional swish and the soft loom of a bursting rocket remained. And up the stairs from the kitchen came the odor of toasting bread. There was a clatter of dishes, too, as if Grandfather Bixby might be hunting the butter. And then—there was an unmistakable smell of something scorching.

It was some time before the old man came slowly up again. He carried triumphantly before him a plate on which lay a slice of toast. His furrowed cheeks were rosy with the heat of the stove, and he glistened with butter in unexpected spots.

"The way of the transgressor is hard, Dicky," he said. "I will



have to see Norah about the kitchen. I'm afraid I have left it upset—very much upset indeed.”

Dicky ate the toast slowly, discriminatingly, taking very small bites and making them last as long as possible. Never had he dreamed of anything so delectable, so ambrosial; even the slight flavor of scorching seemed to add to its richness. And, watching him, some of the anxiety faded from Grandfather Bixby's face.

“If his temperature *should* go up,” he was arguing to himself, “goodness knows there has been enough noise to-day to do it! That mite of toast would n't hurt anybody.”

Nevertheless, he was relieved when, with all Dicky's parsimony, that last bite was gone. With the empty plate in his hand, he wandered around, looking for some out-of-the-way place where it might pass unnoticed until morning.

“Times change, Dicky,” he reflected aloud. “Here am I, who used to punish that mother of yours when she was a little girl—here am I, scared to death for fear she'll come back and scold me.”

“Did she cry when you walloped her?” Dicky asked, with interest. “Where was I, those days?”

“You were in heaven with the angels.” The old man was somewhat out of his depth. “You—you were pluming your little white wings, so when the time came you could fly straight down to earth.”

Dicky sat up, wide-eyed and shaky.

“Then the doctor told me a whopper,” he asserted. “*He* said I grew in a hollow stump, and he carried me here in a satchel.”

Grandfather Bixby was slightly confused: he paused before the window with the plate in his hand. Had he raised his eyes, he would have seen a man, a tall young man in a boyish soft hat, who was standing across the street, looking eagerly over. At sight of Grandfather Bixby's thin old figure and black skull-cap, the stranger's eyes softened wonderfully. He even took a step forward; then he stopped, and drew himself up.

Grandfather Bixby reached out with the plate; it had just occurred to him that no one would see it if he put it on the sill. Just how it slipped he did not know, but it did, and fell with the peculiar silvery crash of the best china to the walk below. Not only that, but it carried down with it the medicine bottle, left there for coolness.

“The way of the transgressor is hard,” repeated Grandfather Bixby, staring ruefully at the empty sill. “I—I don't know what we will do now. There went your medicine.”

Dicky was not interested. The slice of toast had generated many foot-pounds of energy, and he had secured one of the Roman candles from the bed-post. He held it up in his thin arms and squinted along it. There was a fuse—oh, it was complete, all but the match, and there

were even matches on the bedside table. It is a terrible and lonesome thing to pass a Fourth of July without a fire-cracker or a Roman candle.

Shortly after, the watcher across the street saw the light go down in the sick-room, and a stealthy old gentleman in slippers come out the door and hurry toward the corner drug-store. The young man meant to go away, but there was something about the house across—the house which he had vowed never to enter again—there was something that seemed to hold him. And then—there were strange splutterings and muffled explosions from somewhere. If he had n't known that Helen was with the boy, he would have said that some one was putting off fire-crackers up there.

At that moment, from between the rose-pink curtains sailed a vivid yellow ball of fire. It hung for a second over the quiet street and then fell slowly, dying into a gilded spark. It was followed by another, and yet others, bursting softly from their chrysalis beyond the curtains, speeding out to form a short-lived constellation in the night. The last golden sphere went awry, and lodged in the soft draperies: the gold became red, a thin circle of fire that spread and smoked. With a queer sound, an oath that sounded like a sob, the watcher ran across the street and into the house he had vowed never to enter again.

A young woman with a wistful mouth, something like Dicky's, turned the corner and came up the street. A fleck of yellow fire was dying in the gutter, but she did not notice it, and up above the red circle had faded away. Only a futile spark sped starward to die with myriads of its brothers in the summer sky.

Grandfather Bixby came quickly down the street. It had taken some time, but he had hoped Helen was not home yet. He tip-toed in and went very softly up the stairs, to stand dumfounded in the nursery door.

First of all, the white quilt was covered with brown singed places and scraps of red paper, and all that was left of the rose-pink curtains lay smoking on the hearth. In a big chair sat a young man, with Dicky, in a blanket, on his lap, and on her knees beside the two, with her arms as nearly as possible around them both, was Helen! Helen!

In that moment Grandfather Bixby forgot the ice-cream, the toast, the broken plate, and the spilled medicine. The other things, being a wise man, he ignored.

"That's it! That's it!" he snorted with rampant virtue, from the doorway. "After I spend the whole evening trying to keep that youngster quiet, you two young idiots do your best to put him on his back again."

Some time after he had closed the door, Dicky raised a drowsy head

and interrupted the whisperings of the other two members of the little group.

"What's that?" he asked thickly. From below came stealthily the clinking of broken china on a pan and the cautious swish of a broom. His father only drew him closer, and, leaning across, kissed the young woman on the mouth that was like Dicky's.

"For all I care," he said, "it might be Grandfather Bixby sweeping up the best china."



## JULY

*By Thomas L. Masson*

JULY illustrates a great truth—that you can carry a good thing too far. Not content to stay like June, she insists on rubbing it in, so to speak. Perhaps it is too much to say that her attentions are unbearable; but that they make us restless and inattentive to business is only too true.

And the worst of July is that she has a habit of fooling us; that is to say, she makes it imperative that we give up our present settled habits and go somewhere else, and how often it is that somewhere else is disappointing!

And yet, on the other hand, how many splendid opportunities she gives us! Hand in hand with her we may climb mountains, swim in the sea, and scorn the baser coverings of winter.

July is the month of freedom. Who cares for responsibilities now? Who cares for stern duty or the call of conscience? Politicians and saints, the rich and the poor, have all of them more of the same setting than they did have.

Perhaps the most unkind thing one can say of July is that it is the homeless month. It tries, however, to make up to us from its own gift bag what it withholds in the way of genuine nourishment and home comforts; it gives us balmy airs, and still holds up to our gaze the picture that June painted for us, albeit somewhat faded and burned—not so vivid as it was.

July also in her own individual manner begins to tug at our purse-strings. She shoos away our responsibilities and invites us out into the open to have it out with our desires.

No matter what the cost is, July is importunate. She will have her way in spite of everything.

## THE TOSS

*By A. R. Goring-Thomas*

TWO men and one woman, all three unknown to one another, were waiting for Desdemona Deane in Desdemona's small drawing-room. Each one of them had been bidden to come to tea with Desdemona on Thursday; not to be a minute after four, because Desdemona must have a long talk with them or die, and she was dining with the Pote at six. It was Thursday afternoon, and the time was 4:35.

The fat man sitting in an arm-chair by the window observed to the others that Desdemona had already lost thirty-five minutes' soulful conversation with each of them, which, reckoned non-concurrently, meant the loss of one hundred and five minutes' ecstasy. He suggested that she was dead of chagrin. The other two laughed pleasantly.

"She has probably forgotten," said the woman, a handsome person with a presence. "Forgetting is one of Mona's charms," she added.

Then they lapsed into silence and wondered about one another.

The other man, a long, thin fellow with glossy black hair and a poetic eye, broke the silence. "I think I hear her in her room," he said. "She is probably diving desperately into her pretties as we speak, and will burst upon us like a vision in a minute or two."

Desdemona Deane, in a spotless white dress and with her blue eyes alight, her hair a perfect basket of careful curls and blue ribbons, burst into the room as he spoke.

"You dear, delightful people!" cried Desdemona enthusiastically. "How charming it is to see you again! I hope you haven't been waiting long. I've been with Margaret Brains Sullivan." No one knew who Margaret Brains Sullivan was, and Desdemona did not enlighten them. "The poor, dear thing," she continued, "is just demented with her teeth, and as she is frightened out of her senses at the bare idea of seeing a dentist, I had to stay with her and comfort her a bit. She's a most delightful creature, and as witty as the Pote here"—pointing to the long man with the poetic eye—"when he's warmed his wits with a pint of wine. Margaret was groaning with the agony of that tooth when she says, 'The difference,' says she, 'be-

tween going to the dentist and the devil is that it's cheaper and pleasanter to go to the devil.' That's true. And the next time I have any bridge-work done in me mouth—and there's a small fortune there already—I won't go to me Philadelphia gentleman in Harley Street, but I'll consult a civil engineer. Now, *do* say I did n't keep you all waiting, and who 'll have tea?"

She poured out the tea without waiting for any reply, and continued talking. "Hilda," she said to the woman with the presence, "I have n't seen you for ages, dear. What are you doing now? Resting?"

"Yes. I was in the cast of 'Scoffing Jenny,' but that devil Mrs. Tim humbugged me over that stupid comedy of Lady May East's, and I gave the part up."

"What a shame! And it is such a success, too!"

"Where you in Lady East's play? I don't remember seeing you," said the Poet.

"Mrs. Tim—you know how charming she can be when she likes—came to me and implored me to take a part in Lady East's play, a part that would exactly suit me, she said, and I told her I was cast for 'Scoffing Jenny' on tour, and she said that though 'Scoffing Jenny' was certainly very vulgar, it was too really funny to be a success in the Provinces, and that, any way, Lady May East had made a bet that she would write and produce a play in a fortnight, and Mrs. Tim must have an answer at once. So I went to the rehearsals."

"A fortnight over *that* play!" said Desdemona. "I could map out a play like that while I was brushing my hair!"

"And do it better, my dear," the actress assured her, "for everything in 'The Stolen Goloshes' was hopelessly wrong. No lines, you know, and everybody wondering where their places were on the stage, and wandering about all over the place. Of course it was a society thing, and Mrs. Tim was wafted about supported by Lords and Countesses. We were rehearsing one afternoon. She was sitting in the stalls surrounded by Society. Suddenly she screamed out my name. 'Miss Hilda Scott,' she screamed, 'you play that part with the finesse of an aged cow.' I stopped and stared at the woman, I was so taken aback. 'Of course you can't help being so plain,' she went on, 'but plain people on the stage ought to have charm. You are quite without charm, Miss Hilda Scott.'"

"Mrs. Tim is a beast to other women. What did you do?"

"I just walked off the stage and out of the stage-door, which is exactly what Mrs. Tim wanted me to do."

"Why?"

"Lady May East wanted the part herself."

"We want a theatrical union," said the Poet. "What with actor-

managers and wealthy amateurs flooding the profession, a real actor is a very rare bird."

"Yes. And call it 'The Slaves' Protection Society'!"

"It's me birthday," said Desdemona, "and the Pote here sent me some verses by the morning post. The loveliest things you ever heard in your life! He says every year is a hill which affords the world a fresh view of me charms and adds a fresh delight to the beauties behind me. Sweet idea, is n't it? So when he looks around me he's bewildered by me many delightful prospects. The fellow is distracted about me, and it's the light of me lovely eye that inflames his genius for him. I can't remember the lines. I'd read them to you only they're reposing next to me heart, and me dress fastens up at the back. Pote, recite your verses!"

"For heaven's sake, spare me, Desdemona!" said the Poet fervently.

"Don't call me Desdemona like that"—she imitated his precise, careful speech—"with your dreadful English accent making bullets of every syllable! It makes me feel like the lady who took a header into the freezing streams of the land of Denmark. Make it Italian. *Dez-day*, then let your tongue go at a mild gallop over the *monah*." She tossed her head brightly. "Pronounced like it goes better with me coiffure and the ribbons!"

At this moment the maid brought in a telegram.

Desdemona screamed at its contents: the scream was perfectly controlled and quite melodious. "It's from George Craig. He says he has been the happiest man on earth since Sunday, and he's coming in to tea. The ridiculous creature! What shall I do with him?"

"Since Sunday?" said the Poet.

"I went out on the river with him last Sunday," said Desdemona.

"Who was with you?" asked the Poet.

The fat man and the actress looked at each other. Each hoped to find in the other an information bureau.

Desdemona laughed gaily, but her blue eyes calmly measured the Poet. "It was the loveliest day I ever had on the river in me whole life," she said. "The sun shone, the birds were singing, and George Craig in his flannels was perfectly lovely. I had to be sweet to him."

"And," said the Poet icily, "was any one with you?"

"No. Another would have spoilt the effect. The day was so lovely; I wanted the creature to be happy. Of course I said things. I always do, you know. I love him, and you, Pote, and eight other men besides. If I could marry the whole ten of you, I'd be the happy and contented woman. But if I married any one of you, I'd just be hankering after the other nine the first week of the honeymoon. It's the literary temperament I've got. I get it from me grandfather,



who was Dean of Cork and the greatest literary character Ireland ever produced."

The fat man and the actress rose together. "Must you both go?" asked Desdemona Deane. "And are you going, too?" she asked the Poet, and the inquiry was clearly a veiled request.

"No," he said positively, and leaned back in his chair.

"George Craig will be here in a minute," she said to her two departing guests. "You leave me like the apple of discord suspended on a string, with two hungry school-boys getting ready to eat me."

As the door closed, the Poet said sternly, "I wish you would occasionally remember that you are engaged to marry me."

"Am I?" said Desdemona critically.

"Do behave with a little common-sense, after five years——"

"There's nothing commonplace about me," protested Desdemona. "I'm Irish."

"Will you be serious?"

"I paid me bills last Monday, and I've no occasion to be serious for a whole month to come! Besides, it's me birthday!"

The Poet put his head in his hands. The door opened and admitted Mr. George Craig. Desdemona seized him by both hands. "I'm delighted to see you!" she cried. "Here's the poor Pote, green as Old Ireland with jealousy, because of you. Tea? Two lumps of sugar and plenty of milk. See how I remember your tastes. Well, you think I'm engaged to you, and the Pote says I'm engaged to him. You'll have to settle it somehow between ye."

Mr. Craig, a fair, fresh, manly-looking fellow, flushed painfully. "But you are engaged to me," he said hurriedly.

"She has been engaged to me for at least five years," observed the Poet.

Mr. George Craig stared angrily at the speaker. "This lady is engaged to me," he said positively. "I don't know who you are," he said to the Poet. His tone made it offensively clear that he did not want to know. "You can't go back on what you said to me last Sunday at Bourne End," he said to Desdemona. "You remember you said——"

"Tut! tut!" cried Desdemona quickly. "Sunday is years ago! You can't expect a lady to remember all she said on a fine Sunday the Thursday after! I love ye both, so you'd better toss up for me."

"Really, Desdemona," said the Poet sharply, "this is past a joke!"

"I don't like your tone, sir," said young Mr. Craig savagely. Desdemona saw him clench his hand, and she knew he was longing to use his fists on the poet. She gave him a quick glance of admiration.

"Come," she cried gaily, "it's the only way out of it. I'm pre-

pared to marry either of ye this very minute and so make both of ye miserable for the rest of your lives—which ye richly deserve! Come! I'll toss, and the Pote shall cry."

"Really, Desdemona——" expostulated the Poet.

"What is it? Do you say 'heads'?"

"No, tails," said the Poet sulkily.

"Tails it is. And that's one to you, Pote. What is it? 'Tails' again?"

"No, heads."

"Then it is n't. And that's one to you, George Craig. For the third and last time, what is it?"

"Heads."

"And so it is, and you win, Pote."

"Then may I hope——" began the Poet severely.

"You may hope nothing," interrupted Desdemona, "for I'm not having you at all."

"I don't understand you," said the Poet helplessly.

"Don't I know that?" said Desdemona. "Is n't that the nut you break your teeth on? Can't you remember I'm an Irish woman? If you'd had a grain of sense, you would have lost that toss!"

"Then," said George Craig, the cloud clearing from his face, "may I——"

"You may kiss my hand," said Desdemona, holding out a beautiful, slim, white hand.

The two looked at her blankly. "Where are we?" asked young Craig.

"Sure, I don't know," said Desdemona, radiantly smiling, "but there's a tube round the corner that will take you anywhere in reason. Any way, I must go and dress, for I'm going to dine to-night with me friend the Juke, for he's the only man of me acquaintance that gives me a reliable brand of champagne with me dinner. Go away, for I've to get into me new pink silk sheath, and it takes me a good half-hour to wriggle into it, and when I'm safely enveloped in that blessed garment I have to deny myself half me lawful dinner for fear of accidents. Go away with you, now!"

"I thought you were dining with me to-night?" said the Poet.

"Then I'm not, for I'm dining with me friend the Juke. 'A jug of wine and thou,' me dear fellow, is not my idea of a birthday feast. Good-by, and come and have tea with me next Thursday to the minute of four o'clock!"

She watched the men down the stairs and out of the street door. "Potes are all very well," she said, "but they need n't be bears. He's the dear little fellow, is George Craig! But I'm old enough to be his—aunt!"

# THE ETERNAL FEMININE

*By Elsie Singmaster*

SUSAN EHRHART stood at the kitchen sink, washing dishes and crying. Her tall, muscular figure shook, the tears ran, unchecked, down her face, and the little house was filled with the sound of her voice. She cried as one who knows no shame, as if she did not care if all Millerstown or all Lehigh County or all the world heard her.

"I am going right away home to my Mom."

She listened for an instant, as if expecting a response; but none came, unless the regular tap, tap, tap, of a shoemaker's hammer somewhere in the neighborhood could be called an answer. Indeed, as she listened, it seemed to lose for a second its regularity and become animate, telegraphic, intelligible. The taps became shorter, they rose in a crescendo to a single loud stroke, then they went on evenly. It was as if they said:

"I don't care if you do."

Susan finished her dishes, dried her hands, and put on her sun-bonnet and shawl. Then she opened the door and went out.

"I am going right away home to my Mom," she announced to the quiet night.

The taps went on evenly. Susan walked across the yard to a little shop.

"I am going right away home to my Mom."

When there was still no verbal answer, she lifted her hand and beat, not upon the door, but upon the wooden wall beside it. She heard the wild clatter of a thousand shoe-nails falling to the floor, as the boxes toppled from the shelf within, then an angry exclamation.

Without going in, she went out the road toward Zion Church. It was not long after sunset, and there was still a faint gray light in the west, against which the roadside trees stood out dimly, and by which Susan, if she had cared, might have picked her way through the mud. The cold March wind blew upon her back. As she plodded along, bowed and bent, she looked like a work-worn peasant. She might have posed for Millet. But in free, Pennsylvania German America, it was not necessary to suffer her wrongs silently. As she went she cried aloud:

"I am going right away home to Zion Church to my Mom."

A stranger coming to Millerstown and meeting Sarah Ann Mohr or old man Fackenthal, or indeed almost any one of her citizens, would have said that the Pennsylvania Germans were kindly, hospitable folk, a little given to gossip, perhaps, but possessing in the main many more virtues than faults. Any one who met only Samuel Ehrhart, on the other hand, would be likely to say that the Pennsylvania Germans were sordid, parsimonious, and disagreeable. Samuel's character was enough to prejudice the observer against his whole race.

How he had won Susan, no one in Millerstown knew. She was not handsome, she had stooping shoulders and a long thin face, and she was six inches taller than her husband. But surely she must have had at least one better chance! And, lacking that, would it not have been better for her to stay forever in her father's house? Samuel's aunt had looked curiously at her as she stood before the stove in Samuel's kitchen, manufacturing a delicious meal out of the small rations which Samuel allowed.

"Susan," she said, the words bursting from her as if they could no longer be restrained, "Susan, what did you want with Samuel? Did you like him?"

Susan did not answer. Instead, she had looked down at Samuel as he came in from the shop. He might have been a tenderly loved child or a treasured jewel. Then she looked at his aunt as if words were powerless to express her emotion. To Susan, Samuel was then still the most wonderful person in the world.

"Like him!" her eyes seemed to say. "Who could help liking him?"

Samuel had gazed uneasily at his aunt as he came in. She rose at once.

"Never mind, Sammy. I'm not going to stay for dinner. Don't you think it!"

"*Ach*, but won't you stay once?" urged Susan. "That is——"

Samuel's aunt saw the swift frown of disapproval, and the bride's amazement, then her prompt and tender look of obedience. This time her voice was sarcastic.

"Don't be frightened, Sammy. I'm going home."

Millerstown watched the couple for a month with wonder and amusement. Then Elias Bittner reported to old man Fackenthal that they had quarrelled.

"What about?" asked old man Fackenthal.

"About insurance. Susan, she has been paying on insurance eight years already, and Samuel, he won't pay no more because he says it is nothing in the Bible from insurance, and he don't believe in making money off of dead bodies."

Old man Fackenthal laughed.

"Samuel would n't give nothing for the graveyard fence because it don't say nothing in the Bible from graveyard fences. Don't he know he will get the money after Susan is dead?"

"He says he don't trust no insurance company."

"But she will lose all the money she has already paid in."

"Well! It is n't his money."

"What did Susan do?"

"She cried and went home to her Mom. But Ellie Benner says she don't believe she said anything to her Mom, or her Mom would n't 'a' let her come back. Her Mom is spunkier than she. Ellie says Susan must just 'a' told her Mom that she came home to visit once a little."

Three times Susan had gone home. The second time it was because Samuel scolded her for inviting her former "company girl" to stay overnight.

"Do you want to land me in the poor-house, with company all the time?" asked Samuel.

The third quarrel arose when Samuel accused her of having pared the potatoes wastefully.

"I saw your potato-peelings in the bucket," he scolded. "Don't you know how to peel potatoes better than that, say!"

Each time, as Millerstown suspected, Susan had not told her mother the real reason for her coming. She cried loudly when she started; but it was three miles to Zion Church, and one may cry away the worst of griefs in that distance. By the time her journey was over, she always thought better of her rage.

Samuel was not at all disturbed. He never doubted that she would return, and in the meantime she was being fed at her father's table, and his own supplies would last longer. He thought sometimes that Susan ate a great deal, but he consoled himself by remembering that she worked a great deal also. He did not believe that this last quarrel was any worse than the others. It had begun when Susan suggested buying flower-seeds for the garden.

"Flower-seeds!" cried Samuel.

"Why, yes. A few such sweet-peas and sturtians, and a few others to it yet. They only cost five cents a package."

"Five cents! Think of the flour you could buy till you have a few packages!"

Susan reluctantly yielded.

"Well, I guess I can get a few seeds from my Mom—if she kept any this year. She thought once she would buy her altogether new ones."

"I don't like flowers," declared the surly Samuel. "They take up

too much room; they are only a nuisance. And think of all you could do while you are working at flowers!"

"But I must have my flowers, I must have my flowers!" Susan had a way of insisting over and over upon things when she was excited. "I cannot get along without flowers. I must have my flowers."

Samuel looked up at her.

"You are not now any more at home," he reminded her. "You will not have any flowers."

"It won't cost nothing," pleaded Susan.

"Yes, it will. It will cost room and time. I know how it goes with flowers."

Susan burst into tears. There never was a human being who cried more easily than Susan.

"I am going home to my Mom. I am going right away home to my Mom to Zion Church to stay."

Samuel thought of the supply of pies and cakes.

"You can go," he said.

Susan's mother was just winding the clock as she walked into the kitchen. Every one else in the house had gone to bed. Mrs. Haas was a short, enormously fat woman, who in spite of her breadth looked younger than her daughter.

"Why, Susan!" she cried. "My, but I am glad to see you! But where is your man? And what is the matter that you are crying?"

Susan's woes burst forth at sound of the kind voice.

"I come home to stay always," she wailed. "Please let me stay always. He is mean to me. He will not let me have flowers, he would not let me have any company girl overnight, he will not pay the insurance that Pop paid always for me, he——"

Mrs. Haas sat heavily down in the kitchen rocking-chair.

"*Um Gotteswillen!*" she cried. "Is it true?"

"Yes, it is true," sobbed Susan. "It is all true. When I came home before, it was each time something wrong. I thought I would try it again. But now I cannot try it again."

"No," said her mother firmly; "I guess you will not try it again. I guess I and your Pop can keep you. You can go now to bed, Susan, in your own bed like always, and I will bring you a little garden tea, and to-morrow we will go and fetch your things."

Samuel looked up calmly from his shoemaker's bench the next morning when Susan came in. He had not expected her back so soon.

"Well?" he grinned.

He heard Susan's answering sob, then a sharper voice. Susan's portly mother pushed her away into the shop.

"I thank the Lord I have this chance to tell you how mean you are, Samuel Ehrhart," she said. "We are here to fetch Susan's clothes."



No mean, stingy man need take care of my children, that is all I have to say, and my children need n't work for such a mean, stingy man."

"B-but——"

Mrs. Haas would not let him go on.

"I and Susan are going to get her things. You can come along to see that we don't get anything of your trash."

Samuel got awkwardly to his feet, dropping the shoes from his leather-aproned lap. He forgot that he had carefully arranged a patch, economically cut from a tiny bit of leather, and that it would be difficult to get it into position again.

"B-but——" he began.

Mrs. Haas slammed the door and was gone. His shoe-nails fell clattering to the floor, but he did not hear. He grew suddenly pale. He knew Susan's value. He had never dreamed that it would be possible to live so cheaply as they had since her advent. She did not only her own work, but she was beginning to wash and clean for the neighbors. He had looked forward to the day when she would become as much of a wage-earner as himself. Perhaps it would have been better to let her have a few flowers. He followed Mrs. Haas over to the house.

Susan sat by the kitchen table. He saw with relief that she was still crying. Susan would be easy to manage.

"Susan——" he began.

Susan's mother appeared at the door of the cupboard with a sauce-pan in her hand.

"Oh, you came to watch, did you? Well, this is Susan's. You can't say it is n't, for I gave it to her."

Samuel stood in the doorway, fingering his apron.

"Susan——" he began again.

Mrs. Haas thrust the sauce-pan beneath his nose.

"It is Susan's, or is n't it Susan's?"

"Yes," he faltered; "it is Susan's."

"Well, then," said Mrs. Haas. She added it to a pile of pans and dishes on the table. "You'd better look a little over those things. Perhaps it is some of yours there." Her eyes dared him to claim any of them. "Now I am going upstairs. Come, Susan."

But Susan did not move. She was too spent with grief. Her mother patted her arm.

"Then stay right there, Susan."

Samuel's eyes brightened. He swiftly determined to say a few things to Susan. But they must be said to her alone.

"Susan," he began, "you can have——"

Mrs. Haas's foot was on the step. She heard the whisper and looked back. She saw that the least bit of Susan's cheek was visible.

"You come with me," she commanded Samuel sternly. "I don't want it said that I took any of your things. I guess I know what I gave Susan when she got married, and I don't believe she got much since, but you come once along and see."

Samuel went with a backward glance. He grew each moment more terrified. He thought that he might promise her more than the flowers. She might keep some of the chicken money.

Mrs. Haas opened the door of the closet in Susan's room. She held up a red petticoat.

"I suppose this is Susan's?"

Samuel was too perturbed to smile.

"Perhaps Susan don't want her things taken away," he ventured timidly.

Mrs. Haas refused to see his meaning.

"I don't know why you would want any left here," she said scornfully. "You could n't wear them. You may be saving, Samuel Ehrhart, but you are not that saving. Is this Susan's?"

"Y-yes," stammered Samuel. The article in question was Susan's hat.

"And this?" It was Susan's best dress.

Samuel had edged toward the door.

"I have something to tend downstairs," he explained. "I must put the draught on for dinner."

"All right," answered Mrs. Haas promptly. "I will go along with you. Here, you can take these clothes of Susan's, and I will take the rest. You can put them on the table, with the other things, then we can pack them in the wagon."

"You might—might—st—stay for dinner."

Mrs. Haas's laughter echoed through the house. "To dinner! When you would n't have Susan's company girl overnight. I guess not!"

Samuel reluctantly picked up an armful of clothes, the familiar gray wrappers and blue skirts. They were so long that they trailed behind him down the steps, and his mother-in-law bade him sharply to gather them up.

Susan had apparently not moved. But the fire was burning brightly, and the tea-kettle was bubbling. Samuel's eyes brightened. Susan's mother also saw the steaming kettle.

"Susan, help me to carry these things to the wagon," she commanded sharply.

Susan lifted her long, tear-stained face. She was crying again like a child, without any attempt to wipe away the tears.

"Ach, Mom," she wailed. "I do not think I am going along with you home."

Mrs. Haas paused, confounded. She stood still, her arms round the bundle of clothes, which was as large as herself.

"Not going along with me home!"

"No, I think I will stay here, Mom."

"You 'think you will stay here, Mom'!" In her amazement she repeated her daughter's words.

"Yes," said Susan. It might have been Samuel's evident fright and repentance which moved her, it might have been the touch of the familiar tea-kettle. "I think I will stay here, Mom."

The bundle of clothes slid from Mrs. Haas's arms!

"You said he would n't let you have any flowers!"

"Yes, Mom."

"You said he scolded you for peeling the potatoes too thick!"

"Yes, Mom."

"You said he made you give up the insurance what your Pop paid, always, so you could have a little something when you are old!"

"Yes, Mom."

"Well, then! Are you crazy?"

Samuel came a step nearer. He still held his bundle; the wrappers and petticoats trailed again about his feet.

"You can have the flowers if you want to, Susan. And you can have a quarter—*ach*, I mean a half of the chicken money, Susan, and——"

Mrs. Haas cut him short.

"Do you believe him, Susan? Do you believe him for a minute?"

Susan hesitated. His words sounded sweet in her ears, but she could not say that she believed them.

"Then come home," commanded her mother, stooping to pick up the clothes.

Susan hid her face in her arms.

"I can't go home, Mom. I can't help it. I know he is mean, Mom. But I can't help it! The whole trouble is—I—I—like him!"

And, with a final wail, Susan took off her sunbonnet, and sought her gingham apron, hanging upon its accustomed hook.



## TWO CHILDREN

BY CHARLES L. O'DONNELL

NAMES do but mock you while they greet;  
Sweetness and Light you are,—  
The light beyond all saying sweet;  
The sweetness, like a star.

# THE TRIUMPH OF JIM'S DAD

*By James William Jackson*

“**W**HAT'S wrong, Dad? Did Mother forget to put pie in your dinner-pail?”

Michael Burke grunted disconsolately as his son Jimmy caught up with him outside the big gates of the Crown Woollen Mills, homeward bound.

Throngs of Crown operatives elbowed the white-bearded engineer and his boy as they threaded their way through the factory yard and a narrow alley, between many-storied, silenced buildings, to the street beyond. A well-dressed girl whose business it was to mend cloth pushed by on one side, a shirt-sleeved and begrimed picker-room hand jostled them on the other, while a couple of coltish lads celebrated their freedom from a long day's restraint by reckless racing. A belated whistle or two out in the maze of mills and chimneys sounded the six o'clock quitting-time.

Michael stalked on grimly. “Flanagan was in the engine-room this afternoon,” he finally vouchsafed, in an aggrieved tone. “He tells me I'm to lose me engine next pay-day.”

A stranger might have felt instant sympathy; but the loss of his place would not be nearly so much of a hardship to Michael Burke as his despondent tones implied. He had been thrifty and a hard worker all his life, and there was enough laid by now to take care of him and of Jimmy's mother. As a matter of fact, the boy had often urged his father to give up work and take life easy. But every suggestion of that nature was regarded by his father as impertinent, and but brought the young man the promise of a “licking.” Such promises had never yet been kept, and at times it seemed that Jimmy set himself perversely to earn the threatened chastisement by taking honest advantage of opportunity.

“You're getting old, Dad; and the firm knows it,” he softly observed, a quizzical smile on his face.

Michael just saved his dinner-pail from being carried off to some distant goal by a pair of rushing youngsters. Then he turned a rebuking face toward his stalwart son. “Shame on ye!” he retorted. “That's what Flanagan said. And me only sixty-nine!”

"Well, any way, Dad," Jimmy persisted, as they swung into the home street, "you won't cut that long beard of yours, you know. The firm's afraid you'll get it caught in the fly-wheel some day. You know how the lint gets on your spectacles."

"I'll lay you across me knee in a minute, Jimmy," Michael threatened wrathfully, as he combed out the cherished appendage with fond fingers.

Jimmy stepped aside so that his father might precede him into the front yard. Then, hurrying ahead, half laughingly, he offered the old man his pretendedly solicitous assistance up the front stoop. He was sufficiently wary, however, to dodge the cuff which Michael aimed at his ear.

Mrs. Burke was apparently more in sympathy. She accorded her husband some of the consolation which Jimmy refused to give. Michael grunted restfully under the influence of her cheering words and the unquenchable optimism that radiated from her beaming face.

Jimmy, meanwhile, used up his traditional rope by inches.

"You'll have lots of time now, Dad," he suggested, "to trade tales down at the grocery—you and old Pete Jones. 'Tween times you can walk up and down the block. I'll buy you a cane."

That was a fine bit of torture, for Michael had never carried a cane, and he resented the implication of approaching decrepitude. But Jimmy persisted:

"I'll fetch your tobacco home when you're not able to go after it; and I'll help you pick out a nice, shady——"

Michael picked up a sugar-bowl and poised it menacingly.

"If you was going to say cimitery lot, Jimmy," he warned, "change yer mind whilst there's time."

"That dish you're handling so recklessly is one of Mother's wedding presents, Dad," Jimmy admonished, his sober tone bringing a little color to the old man's face. "I was talking about a nice, shady place to sit on the porch."

Mrs. Burke now interposed, whereat Jimmy, having finished his coffee, came around behind her chair and punished her with an affectionate bear-hug.

After supper the old man squared about in his arm-chair until he could put his stockinged feet upon the settle. From time to time he snorted out his irritation in fragmentary ejaculations. He seemed to turn the pages of his paper not so much to find news as to find a more satisfactory snorting place.

"It's not because there's any lack of work," he burst out suddenly once, swinging around a little and peering at his wife and son over his gold-rimmed Christmas spectacles—"not with that new mill going up on the other side of the canal, mind ye."

Jimmy chuckled softly; but, of course, that might have been due to something richly humorous in the book he was reading.

Not until bedtime did the old man again refer to the matter so near his heart.

"See here, Jimmy," he begged then, and his tone was the wheedling one of a man with an axe to grind. "Will you speak a word for me at the office? You're a good engineer, and the firm likes ye. They'd listen to ye respectful, at least."

Jimmy shook his head. He put the book away on the shelf beside the clock, and indulged in an aggravating yawn.

Michael looked him fairly in the eye as he came forward. The old man had a lighted lamp in his hand, and one suspender loop was already dangling at his side.

"Won't ye do as I ask, Jimmy?" he pleaded, lifting the light a little higher. "Won't ye help me to keep me engine?"

The reiterated shake of Jimmy's head was very definite. Michael accepted it as final. "Well, then," he declared in solemn tones, as he turned dejectedly toward the stairs, "me and your mother'll move where I can get another engine. We've never been separated yet, boy; and I was countin' on a new bay-window in the parlor when you brought Mary Boyle——"

Jimmy put his arms around the old man's shoulders from behind, caught up the soft white beard in his two hands, and with it gently, laughingly, smothered the sentence.

Michael did not respond to Jimmy's affectionate good-night; nor, the next morning, did he acknowledge his son's breakfast greeting. A dozen little attentions failed to trap the old man into his wonted kindness.

Mrs. Burke dubiously watched her husband start off for the mills; then she turned a beseeching glance upon her son. But Jimmy was something of a wizard. With an arm around his mother's waist, he made a half-score words bring back the cheer into her face before he kissed her good-by.

Michael would have nothing to say as Jimmy hurried up with the dinner-pails, both of which he always insisted upon carrying down each morning. Not a single one of the young man's humorous efforts brought so much as a twitch to his father's lips.

They separated at the gates; for Jimmy's engine was in the upper part of the north mill, while Michael's course lay along the south drive. To Jimmy's pleasant good-morning Michael made no response.

The two often saw each other during the day; but the old man always turned his back stoically. Jimmy hesitated. He was half-mindful, apparently, to capitulate for the sake of his father's smile.

In his own engine-room Michael went about his duties with the



precision of forty years' training. Superintendent Flanagan came in for a moment after the big wheel started and the machinery settled down for the day's work.

"What was you thinking of doing when you get through with the old machine, Mike?" he asked pleasantly.

"Never you mind," Michael retorted shortly. "If you're expecting to be discharged at the same time, you need n't think I'll recommend you where I'm going."

Michael and Flanagan were good old friends, though the superintendent's bantering bade fair to earn him the treatment already meted out to Jimmy.

The old engineer watched his big belt jealously, putting his cheek near to it from time to time, studiously. At half past ten he telephoned the office, and under instructions stopped the engine. There had been high water in the river for a few days, and the bottom of the wheel-pit was six feet below the present water level. The seeping flood had already reached the belt. Michael caught the first warning drop flung off by the fast flying band. Many a younger and more careless man would have gone on until his snapped belt had wrought consternation and havoc on the floor above.

After the pumps were working Michael decided to go up the alley and find out how Jimmy's pit was faring. Of course he would n't ask Jimmy; the firemen across the alley would know.

A dozen feet from his son's engine-room the old man passed the manager. Michael bowed as gracefully as his feelings would permit; but he could not forget that this was the official who accounted a man too old because of a white beard.

The manager returned the greeting genially, quite as if he had no recollection of planning any shameful deed.

Michael avoided even a look into Jimmy's room. With his face toward the fires across the way, he could hear the rhythmic throb of his son's big fly-wheel. He nodded proudly: Jimmy was a good engineer.

A half-dozen men, stripped to the waist and black-enamelled with coal-dust, were shovelling fuel into the dozen fires, one after the other. Nodding to the nearest, Michael was about to ask a question when suddenly he felt a heavy, trembling jar. There was a terrific explosion, and the ground beneath him seemed to lift cleanly and drop. The boiler house swayed back and forth, and there was a furious, insistent hissing.

With a yell of terror, the firemen scurried wildly for the river door. But Michael turned like a flash and faced a white, advancing wall of steam, a pallid balloon filled with the sound of serpents. His face, still quivering from the shock, went as white as the steam.

"My boy!" he ejaculated.

Somewhere within that engine-room—a caldron now—was Jimmy. If the lad had not been struck by the flying head of a burst cylinder, or by the fragments of an exploding steam main, he must have been instantly enveloped in the deadly vapor.

Michael heard a medley of frightened yells and then sounds of running around and above him. Terrified operatives were in panic retreat; and a wild screeching of belts and pulleys indicated that costly machines had been recklessly left to wreak upon themselves the damage of flattened cams and jammed mechanism.

The old engineer dashed across the alley. He knew better than to face the steam upright. On his hands and knees he crawled swiftly through the hot cloud into Jimmy's engine-room, which was as familiar to him as his own.

He was in an agony of anxiety concerning his boy. But the engine was still running and must be stopped. The continuous screaming of the machines was costly music. Chokingly and half-blindly, Michael groped his way over the floor. Finally he stood erect, seized control of the giant engine, and turned off the power.

It had taken him only a moment to wriggle into the engine-room and another moment to shut off the steam. He was searching for Jimmy even before the machinery came to a stop. He crawled around the floor with the mad eagerness of a dog on the scent. His eyes smarted, his long beard dragged before him, and the high-temperated bath sapped his physical strength as rapidly as his despair mounted.

"Jimmy, my boy!" he moaned. "The Lord forgive me I did n't speak to ye!"

Soon the certainty was borne in upon him that Jimmy had been hurled up through the belt shaft by the force of the explosion.

"Jimmy! Jimmy!" he called, half sobbingly.

"Here I am, Dad!" came a voice from the doorway, and the next instant Jimmy himself, on hands and knees, bumped heads with his father.

Out of the enervating vapor bath, out in the alley where there was air to breathe, Jimmy found a seat for his father on the noon hour log. Then he mopped the moisture from the old man's face. A few persons were coming forward now cautiously, but Michael seized the moment of privacy still left to them to whisper:

"Forgive me, Jimmy."

The boy squeezed his father's hand comfortingly. "You took it all too seriously, Dad," he explained. "It was Flanagan's joke—he made me promise to help. Mr. Porter is talking about giving me the new engine beyond the canal. You are to have mine. It's better than yours, any way."

Mr. Porter, the manager, was one of those who came forward. He commended Michael warmly for stopping the machinery so quickly, and accounted for Jimmy's absence by the explanation that he had sent him out to inspect some shafting just before the explosion.

"You're all there yet, Mike," he admitted admiringly. "I was thinking of giving your boy the machine across the canal, but you deserve that promotion, and you shall have it."

A little later Michael and Jimmy had a moment to themselves.

"See here, Dad," Jimmy begged, with a sly grin, "will you speak a word at the office to help me get the new engine they partly promised me? You're a good engineer, and the firm likes you. They'd listen to ye respectful, at least."

For the first time in nearly twenty-four hours the old man laughed.

"Jimmy boy," he warned, "if ye don't mind yer own business and be content, I'll take ye across me knee!"



## FOLKS

*By Ellis O. Jones*

WE are all striving to rise above the condition of mere folks. That's what we are doing when we spend hours with tailors and dressmakers, when we lucubrate for diplomas, when we scramble for titles, offices, culture, wealth, honor, fame, and, finally, for an extra long line of carriages leading up to a mammoth tombstone.

But it can't be done. Pigs is pigs. Monkeys is monkeys. Folks is folks. We look upon the picture of some proud leader of fashion of the past, and we laugh—laugh at them all. We may head a parade down Fifth Avenue, only to go home and be scolded by our wife for not having mailed a letter. We may have made our pen fit the complicated lock of literature, only to be insulted by a bill-collector for being asked to call again. We may think we have reached the pinnacle where we can annex the appellation "superman," only to be compelled to give references to the elusive cook at the employment agency.

Folks is folks. Novels may be written about noblemen. Utopias may be devised by idealists. Some great name may be invested with all the beatific qualities of a deity, but when we get up close, take the Honorable Soandso's by the hand, and look them in the eye, we find they are all folks, just folks.

# THE CLEVERNESS OF MRS. BLAND

*By Catharine Houghton*

MRS. BLAND put a cake into the oven and shut the door with a bang. "I don't care if it does fall," she sputtered. She knew it would n't—her cakes never did.

Peggy, who stood on a chair by the kitchen table, scraping the cake batter from a large yellow bowl, opened her eyes in wonder. She knew something had gone wrong.

In silence she watched her mother as she made and rolled the pie-crust, fitting it carefully into the plate, and giving it now and then a vicious little poke. When she sat down to peel and slice the apples, Peggy was still watching. She usually had a few pieces, but, clearly, Mrs. Bland was not herself to-day, for all the apple went into the pie.

"Now, Peggy, don't you touch that," she said, as she placed the unfinished pie on the table; and her trim figure in its neat print dress bent for a moment to look into the oven.

"Oh, Ma," sighed the little girl wistfully, "it smells awful good! What kind 's it going to be?"

"Don't bother me, Peggy; I'm in a hurry," answered Mrs. Bland impatiently. "You know I want to get through so we can go downtown."

Peggy looked puzzled. But the cake batter was very good, and she soon forgot to wonder what troubled her usually good-natured mother. Again Mrs. Bland's quick fingers rolled the pastry, and, placing it deftly over the apples, she cut the edges, tucked them in, and the pie was ready to be baked.

Peggy scraped the cake-bowl until it was clean. Then she sat down on a chair in the corner of the kitchen and busied herself with some paper dolls; for, child as she was, she knew that the farther out of the way she kept, the less trouble she was likely to encounter.

Mrs. Bland was the most energetic woman in the neighborhood. She baked and cleaned and sewed—early and late—and her house and her children were fitting examples of her industry. Friends and

neighbors came to her for advice. If Mrs. Jones wanted a pattern for the baby's dress, she was sure to find it at Mrs. Bland's. When Jimmy Potter came down with the measles, his mother consulted Mrs. Bland before she called the doctor. No matter whether they came to get a recipe for gingerbread or to borrow a hod of coal, she was always glad to accommodate them.

And only once had she been imposed upon. One day Mrs. Parks had come to borrow money to pay for a set of books which had "come unexpectedly." Mrs. Bland was pleased to let her have it, and it was only after weeks of neglecting to return it that the good woman became angry. It was but four dollars and a half, to be sure; however, there were many ways in which she could use it, and just now, when she wanted to buy a new hat, it was especially needed.

At first, Mrs. Parks always spoke of the money whenever she saw Mrs. Bland, and always had some good excuse for not giving it to her. Once, she did not have her purse; again, she had just paid a bill—always something plausible. Mrs. Bland, in her friendly way, turned the matter off, as of no consequence.

"Oh, that is all right, Mrs. Parks. I'm in no hurry at all. I won't be spending it if you have it."

Weeks went by. Mrs. Parks seemed to avoid meeting her. They rarely met, and when they did there was no mention of the borrowed money. At the end of six months it was still unpaid, so now Mrs. Bland was righteously indignant.

"Here I am, working like a dog to save a little, and that woman not to pay me what she owes me! Putting on such airs, too, with her fine clothes!"

For it was a glimpse of this same Mrs. Parks in a new suit and hat which had roused Mrs. Bland's anger and upset her so completely.

The angrier she became, the faster she worked; and little Peggy, from her corner, watched the flushed face of her mother, and wisely kept her own counsel.

Directly after dinner Mrs. Bland dressed herself and Peggy for their trip down-town. She put on her last year's hat with a sniff of disgust, for, woman-like, she wanted to look as well as her friends.

She felt more conscious than ever of its shabbiness when on entering the trolley-car she saw Mrs. Parks, in all the glory of her fine clothes. It did not ease matters to have her nod with an air of aloofness, which hinted that she was in no mood for conversation.

The conductor came through the car, collecting fares. When he reached Mrs. Parks, she opened her purse, and, finding no change, offered him a five-dollar bill. He, in turn, searched his pockets. Not being able to change it, he glanced stupidly about, as if he expected some one to help him out.

Quick as a flash, Mrs. Bland said, "I'll change it for you, Conductor," and the man placed the bill in her hand.

His look of amazement was equalled only by the start of surprise on the part of Mrs. Parks, when Mrs. Bland calmly handed him fifty cents.

"That's all right, Conductor—the lady understands," said the smiling diplomatist, as she nodded in a friendly way to Mrs. Parks.

It *was* all right. The man returned forty-five cents to his passenger, and she put it in her purse with as much composure as was possible.

The passengers looked from one woman to the other with curious eyes, and at last Mrs. Parks, unable to bear their scrutiny, signalled to the conductor and left the car.

Mrs. Bland slipped a nickel into Peggy's hand, and she, looking into her mother's eyes, knew that the storm was over.

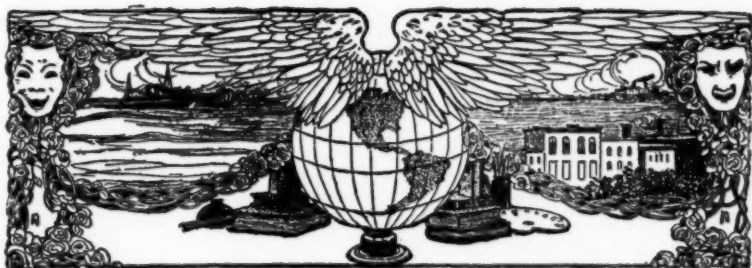
## THE FLAG

BY KATHARINE LEE BATES

**I**T is not fair to see, our starry banner?  
 You, as an artist, who have pledged allegiance  
 Only to Beauty, find it crude in color,  
 Stiff in design, void of romantic symbol,  
 Unvenerable? England's golden lions,  
 Japan's chrysanthemum, imperial flower  
 Blooming in red as on a field of battle,  
 The holy cross of Switzerland, out-value  
 To all impartial, pure, æsthetic judgment  
 The flag our patriot folly terms Old Glory?

I cannot tell. Perchance I never saw it.  
 When on the seas or in some foreign city,  
 Nay, here at home above a country school-house,  
 I find it floating on the wind, it beckons  
 My heart into my eyes. It is not bunting,  
 Mere red and white and blue,—that starry cluster,  
 Those gleaming folds; it is the faith of childhood,  
 The unison of strong, rejoicing millions,  
 The splendor of a vision men have died for,  
 The passion of a people vowed to freedom.





## WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND  
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

### WHAT IS AN AMERICAN?

BY foreigners, the American is sometimes taken for an Englishman—especially by those insouciant of shoe-leather. The historian Freeman went so far as to say that the United States did not seem to him a foreign country: "It was simply England with a difference."

The appreciation of baseball has something to do with this being an American, I think. Walt Whitman would seemingly make the test dwelling in

Inseparable cities, with their arms about each other's necks.

And here is a German to whom the Yankee is a gaunt, sallow dyspeptic—"generally engaged in selling some very odd article: a button-hook and cigarette-holder combined, or a pair of socks which change into an umbrella when you touch a hidden spring." Part of the difficulty in discovering just what an American is, is due to the mixing process the poor fellow had been put through. It would be a simpler matter to decide, what *is n't* an American?

In realizing our present day cosmopolitanism, we forget how near this cosmopolitanism comes to being our tradition. Too often we think only of the British Colonies when our Colonial period is spoken of. Last summer's Champlain celebration escaped futility in reminding us how mixed our stock has been from the beginning—how nearly fortuitous the English supremacy. Why be bullied into exaggerating our debt to the Island Home? It was Captain Basil Hall who told our

grandfathers that "England taught the Americans all they have of speech or thought, hitherto. What thoughts they have not learned from England are foolish thoughts; what words they have not learned from England, unseemly words." It is good to be reminded,—either by an international fête or by re-reading Crèveœur's "Letters from the American Farmer,"—how much we do *not* owe to old England. And it is reassuring, as we contemplate the vast experiment that goes on to-day, to know how well our primitive experiments in race-mixings succeeded. I like to be reminded what good citizens of Philadelphia were Benezet and Stephen Girard; and how justly New York honors her Dutch heritage. "*Ubi panis, ibi patria*," quotes good St. John de Crèveœur, who had married a Yonkers girl named Mehitable Tippet, and tilled a farm in Orange County, near the Jersey line. This Franco-American paints so idyllic a picture that we positively envy the settler his hardships. "The rich and the poor," he says, "are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe;" cultivators boasted in those days "a pleasing uniformity of decent habitations." The Farmer wrote before the age of Tenement Commissions.

Yet in describing the American's complex materials, Crèveœur was modern enough; as modern as his style. "I could point out to you," he writes, "a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. *He* is an American who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being . . . melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigor, and industry which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle. . . . There is room for everybody in America."

We cannot improve upon Crèveœur to-day. If he generalizes pretty boldly, so do we. We're worried, when we stop to think; but, on the whole, we're proud. Aldrich, to be sure, sang of "Unguarded Gates,"—and the motley throng that passes them:

Men from the Volga and the Tartar steppes,  
Featureless figures of the Hoang-Ho,  
Malayan, Scythian, Teuton, Kelt, or Slav,  
Flying the Old World's poverty and scorn,—

but we still like to think we can digest the lump. And no one has phrased better than Crèveœur the idealism of the true American—however you define him. They say that Crèveœur's book sent five hundred Norman families to Ohio—only to perish there. At least,

the American Farmer never represented his adopted country as that "French *Pays de Cocagne*," where, by Franklin's account, the streets are paved with half-baked loaves, the houses tiled with pancakes, and fowls fly ready-roasted, crying, "Come, eat me!" Whatever the American may be, his is the chosen land of labor; the land where hard work ennoble the hardest characters: the land of the Almighty Dollar, tempered by the Almighty Ideal.

WARREN BARTON BLAKE

### WANTED: A MERCHANT MARINE!

WHILE President Taft was on the Pacific Coast, as the pleasantest sop he could proffer, he assured his hearers that during the present session of Congress there should be passed a ship-subsidy bill which would inaugurate the rebuilding of an American merchant marine. Of course he simply meant that he would use his best efforts to that end and fancied he foresaw success. Let us hope that he foresaw wisely and not too well; but we cannot forget that Roosevelt, through two sessions of Congress, did his best, even bringing the weight of the big stick to bear, without securing the passage of the bill. Somewhere in the country—mostly in the Middle West—there is a vast opposition to the policy.

The whole nation believes in protection—protecting infant industries—and while our merchant marine, with its American made and manned clipper ships sailing every sea, was once the envy of the world, it has faded before the subsidies paid by other nations to encourage opposition, and so nearly expired under the drastic and oppressive laws which Congress has enacted to protect American sailors—American sailors are mostly the rakings and scrapings of other nations, who come here and take out papers to receive the benefit of those laws—that our marine is to-day the most infantile infant imaginable. When Secretary Root made his famous South American trip he reported that out of upward of two thousand merchant ships he saw, but one flew the American flag.

It is an industry which needs protection if ever an industry needed it, and which will show a much greater profit in return than any of the industries at present so expensively protected. Out of South America's sea trade, for example, amounting to five hundred million dollars a year, America receives but eighty million dollars. Our trade with Australia and across the Pacific is diminishing every year. We do not even carry our own mails—not even to Europe—much less our own products. We pay other nations to perform the service for us.

How much do we pay? Well, in the last fifteen years the actual

balance of trade has amounted to over six billion dollars in our favor, while the world has really paid us only three hundred millions—and even that includes several large sums like the Pennsylvania Railroad's fifty million dollar French loan, and is not all for value received. The vast difference, obliterating our balance of trade, is largely what we have paid to other nations for ocean transportation.

We do not hesitate to pass a subsidy bill—which could not, for years to come, amount to an annual expense of five million dollars—through any motive of economy. Certainly not, when, without a ship but battle-ships, we are digging a five hundred million dollar ditch at Panama, which no possible amount of patronage can ever make self-supporting, much less profitable, and when the only conceivable result will be to help other nations to rob us of what little remains of our Pacific trade.

The canal is an expensive luxury for a nation without a merchant-man to benefit by it, but, after all, it is nothing compared with the folly of a hundred and forty million dollar a year navy without a collier to carry fuel for it. If we were to go to war, where the international laws of neutrality prevented our hiring foreign merchant-men, our beautiful navy would be helpless. It could not move beyond reach of a mainland coaling station. A navy without an auxiliary merchant marine is the ideal of painted ships upon a paint-ocean. In a recent address, Justice Brewer is quoted as saying of the voyage of the American battle-ships, that it was money well wasted. It might be if it roused us by the fact that we had to hire more foreign ships, all told, than we sent battle-ships, to make the voyage possible; if it roused us to the truth that only by having a merchant marine of our own can we ever use the navy which costs us a hundred and forty million dollars a year, or ever profit by the canal, which will cost us more to maintain than it can yield in revenue, or ever realize the benefit of the balance of trade which in the last fifteen years amounted to more than six billion dollars.

Almost any sum would be well wasted which resulted in the creation of a merchant marine.

WILLARD FRENCH

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## THE FESTIVAL OF INJURY

THE phrase-maker ought to have a good time on the Glorious Fourth. Only once a year is he permitted to trot out such resonant alliteratives as "a holocaust of horror," and such shuddery epithets as "an orgy of mutilation." The elect will smile in superior tolerance of the yellow newspapers as they read their lurid headlines—that is, the elect will smile if they have lost no houses by fire,

bound up no bloody little thumbless hands, amputated no shattered child limbs, feared no impending horror of lockjaw, bandaged no sightless baby eyes, and never knelt in agony beside the sudden couch of death! It is to be hoped—but perhaps not to be expected—that the same gray-whiskered gentlemen who annually agitate themselves into warlike demands for World Peace, and the same dear old lady-saints who weep over the Erring, of various brands, will all turn in and help suppress the barbarities of an explosive, combustive, destructive, mutilative Fourth. “Boys will be boys,” urges one complacently—and thus encourages an insane festival of injury that annually prevents thousands of else happy youngsters from ever again being normal children. If men and women won’t pity and protect the children, what shall we say of such men and women?

J. B. E.

## THE SUPREMACY OF THE AMERICAN FARMER

THE American farmer holds the centre of the commercial stage. Those of us who have talked with him, and have heard his hearty laugh at tales of panic, realized this long ago, but Secretary Wilson, in the report of the Department of Agriculture, puts the statement into concrete figures. His report for 1909 says:

The value of farm products is so large that it has become merely a row of figures. For this year it is \$8,760,000,000, or a gain of \$869,000,000 over 1908. The value of the products has nearly doubled in ten years.

Both the number of farmers, and the number of acres under cultivation, have increased somewhat over last year; and Secretary Wilson’s report shows that in the farmers’ possession is a sum of money so vast that one can hardly grasp its meaning. Many of them have bought automobiles, taken expensive vacations, improved their buildings, and bought new machinery, besides spending goodly sums for other conveniences and luxuries, yet even then they have something to invest. They could not possibly spend it all foolishly, even were they so inclined. With the setting of every sun, the farmers’ money-bag bulges with the weight of twenty-four new millions.

Place your finger on the pulse of your wrist and count your heartbeats—one, two, three, four. With every four of those quick throbs, day and night, one thousand dollars clatter into the gold-bin of the American farmer.

How incomprehensible it would seem to Pericles, who saw Greece in her Golden Age, if he were told that the yearly revenue of his country in those days was now no more than a day’s pay for the men who till

the soil of this infant republic! How it would amaze a resurrected Christopher Columbus to know that the combined revenues of Spain and Portugal were not nearly so much as the earnings of the farmers' hens!

Agricultural exports—mere crumbs that fall from the farmer's table—have brought in enough foreign money since 1892 to enable the American farmer to buy every foot of railroad in the United States.

Many are the jokes that are perpetrated at the expense of the farmer, and many persons still share in the opinion that he is behind his city cousin in knowledge and attainments, and that anything is good enough for him. Yet this is effectually disproved by his success.

The farmer is a commercialist, a man of the twentieth century. He works as hard as the old-time farmer did, but in a higher way. He makes use of the four R's—readin', 'ritin', 'rithmetic, and rural telephony. Telephone service has made good with the farmer. He wants more of it, and a better quality than he was satisfied with a few years ago, and the best part of it is, he has money to buy all he wants.

Good for the farmers! May they continue to enjoy the prosperity that ought to be theirs.

WILLIAM D. LINDSAY

### A MUNICIPAL PROBLEM

THE growth of corns and bunions upon the asphalt streets in American cities seems to be increasing with untold rapidity.

City officials are just beginning to realize their presence, and it is probable that within the next ten or twenty years stringent remedies will be taken to abolish them.

As every chauffeur or cab-driver knows, they are most prominent and protuberant between the street-car tracks. These immense street corns are really unnecessary and confer no benefit upon humanity, yet they exist without molestation. While it would not be a bad idea to organize an Anti-Street Bunion Society to suppress this advancing evil, still by the adoption of this simple little method all trouble can be averted.

Let the street commissioner or contractor who has charge of a corn-covered public highway try to cut them off with a sharp spade. If he fails, instruct him to apply at the nearest drug-store, where he can purchase the most effective corn remover guaranteed to perform the operation in one night. No time should be lost, as this awful pest is growing hourly.

JOHN H. McNEELY





### FIVE-MINUTE NOVELS FOR THE HAMMOCK

#### THE PINK EMERALD; OR, THE TRAGEDY OF ASPEN BEACH

The twilight hour had passed, and night was spreading her damson mantle over all. Within the hotel parlors merry-makers by the dozen were making the walls echo and re-echo with wholesome laughter. The excellent string orchestra was sounding forth its dreamy waltzes and gay mazurkas, and everywhere soft, sweet peacefulness hovered over all. Into such a scene entered Marian, radiant, emerging from the elevator with a little song on her lips and mischief in her eyes. Such a picture of lovely young womanhood had seldom, if ever, dawned even upon so fair a scene. Her cheeks seemed more deeply pink to-night than ever before, and there were not a few who looked upon this fair young girl as she stood there who could not inwardly surmise the reasons for this intensification of her rose-tinted complexion. Lord Altamount de Brash had arrived at Aspen Beach only that morning, returning from the West after an absence of many days, and it was known with what ardor he had worshipped at the shrine of the lovely Marian Boggs the winter before, literally laying his name, his title, his past, present, and future, at her feet; and on that long motor-ride from Aspen Beach to Halibut Inn and back, taken in the early afternoon, young De Brash had evidently had time to let her know of all that lay hid within his heart, for as she descended from the car on their return it was noticed that there was a flashing circlet on Marian's left third finger that had not been there when they started out, and the connoisseur would have instantly recognized in its golden setting the famous pink emerald of the De Brash collection of family jewels, a rare gift presented to Hubert de Brash by Henry the Eighth of England for his steadfast loyalty

## Walnuts and Wine

in acting as his royal master's best man at four or five of his marriages. The possession of this historic gem could mean but one of two things—either Marian had promised to become the Countess de Brash, or her father, ex-Senator Boggs, had taken it as security for a loan and was permitting his daughter to wear it. Those who knew the Senator were inclined to doubt the latter surmise.

As Marian entered the ball-room, she looked about her expectantly, as if seeking for some one. Not finding the cherished face, her countenance became strained for a moment, and then, to the surprise of all, she tottered. The pink faded from her cheek, and she sank moaning to the floor. Instantly a hundred willing hands were stretched forth to aid her.

"The Beach!" she gasped faintly. "The Beach!"

And then she swooned.

Every one rushed immediately to the Beach, but there was nothing unusual to be found there, and they as speedily returned, but the unhappy girl with tender hands had been carried to her room, where she lay in a delirium for six ensuing weeks, murmuring always, "The Beach, the Beach!"

Singularly enough, in all that time Lord Altamount de Brash did not appear. He had vanished as completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed him, as, alas! indeed it had. In her first lucid moment Marian had confessed the dreadful truth:

IN A SPIRIT OF PLAYFULNESS SHE HAD BURIED  
HER LOVER IN THE SAND AND FORGOTTEN TO DIG  
HIM UP AGAIN!

### EPILOGUE

"Well, she got the best part of him anyhow!" said Mrs. Grundy. "The pink emerald is still in the family."

"Yes," said the Receiver of the Boggs Manufacturing Company gloomily; "when the Senator absconded I found that the pink emerald and a couple of last year's rain-checks were the sole tangible assets of the company. I returned the emerald to Marian with my own hands."

"I did not know you were a man of sentiment," said Mrs. Grundy, tapping him on the arm with her fan.

"I'm not," said the Receiver. "But when I came to dispose of it for the benefit of the Senator's creditors, I found the famous pink emerald was nine parts gelatine and one part powdered glass!"

*John Kendrick Bangs*

## Walnuts and Wine

### SUMMER SCIENCE

*By Charles C. Jones*

They say that water, freezing,  
will expand; I know it bursts  
a pitcher in a trice. This is  
a hundred pounds of water—and

This is about  
those hundred  
pounds of ice.

### DOUBLE-POINTED

*Her Summer Beau of the Year Before:* "Ah, Miss Billings,  
do you not remember me?"

*Herself:* "Yes, indeed. You have always been fresh in my  
memory."  
*George Frederick Wilson*

Even though you never took a dip in the surf, there are bath-  
ing suits at the seashore that would make your head swim.

*C. C. Mullin*

### EXEMPLARY PATIENCE

A Sioux City physician had been out during office-hours on  
an emergency call, and when he returned he opened the door of  
his consultation-room and inquired:

"Who has been waiting the longest?"

A tailor who had called to present his bill rose and said:

"I think I have, Doctor. I delivered your clothes to you three  
years ago."

*R. M. Winans*

### THE OPTIMIST DOWN TO DATE

Robert Watchhorn, former United States Commissioner of  
Immigration, recently cited, as an example of optimism, the remark  
of a young man who fell down an elevator shaft from the fourteenth  
floor. As he passed the fifth floor he was heard to remark, "All  
is well thus far."

*Karl von Kraft*

### PERFECT AGREEMENT

The contributor wrote: "The enclosed are original, and have  
never been published."

The editor answered: "I can quite believe it."

*L. T. H.*

## Walnuts and Wine

### A MATHEMATICAL REQUEST

Little Mary, seven years old, was saying her prayers. "And, God," she petitioned at the close, "make seven times six forty-eight."

"Why, Mary, why did you say that?" asked her mother.

"'Cause that's the way I wrote it in 'zamination in school to-day, and I want it to be right."

*Dick Dickinson*

### A KNOWING GIRL

When young Lord Stanleigh came to visit an American family, the mistress told the servants that in addressing him they should always say His Grace. So when the young gentleman one morning met one of the pretty house-servants in the hallway and told her that she was so attractive-looking he thought he would kiss her, she demurely replied, clasping her hands on her bosom and looking up into his face with a beatific expression, "O Lord, for this blessing we are about to receive, we thank Thee."

*T. C. Galbraith*

### NOT FOR A GENTLEMAN'S EARS

"Repeat the words the defendant used," commanded counsel for the woman plaintiff in a case of slander being tried in the First Criminal court of Newark recently.

"I'd rather not," bashfully replied the defendant. "They were hardly words to tell to a gentleman."

"Whisper them to the judge, then," magnanimously suggested counsel—and the court was obliged to rap for order.

*M. F. Maclure*

### 'T IS SOMETIMES THUS

*By Charles Houston Goudiss*

I took her out in my new canoe  
As the summer's day towards evening drew,  
A wooing, bashful lover;  
I kissed her on her lips divine,  
And asked her softly to be mine—  
When the durned old boat turned over.

### A CATTISH SUGGESTION

*Ethyl*: "My poor head aches frightfully."

*Claire*: "Why don't you take your hair off and rest it, my dear?"

*W. Carey Wonderly*

Walnuts and Wine

**PEARS**

**MATCHLESS FOR THE COMPLEXION**

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

## Walnuts and Wine

### THE BEST TRICK OF ALL

Naval officers love to tell of the reckless pluck shown by the enlisted men of the navy; and of these stories perhaps none is more interesting than the tale of the Irish seaman who entered in a certain rivalry with a Dutch sailor.

In the old days an American wooden ship of war once lay in a Dutch port, and a number of Dutch sailors came aboard to fraternize.

Shortly a spirit of rivalry arose. The sailors tried to outdo one another in athletic tricks; and the honors were for some time with the Americans. Finally, however, to the consternation of our men, one Dutchman climbed to the very top of the mainmast and there stood on his head.

Seeing that his fellows were much downcast by reason of the Dutchman's feat, one Irishman leaped to his feet, exclaiming:

"By hivins! I won't let a fat Dutchman beat me."

Accordingly, this reckless Celt scampered up the mast like a monkey, and when he had reached the top he prepared to duplicate the foreigner's feat. He put his head down and gave a push with his feet. The first push was n't hard enough, and he dropped back. But the second push was too hard, and he fell heels over head. His back struck the first rope, his legs the next, his neck the next, and so on, somersault after somersault, till, astonishing as it may seem, he landed on his feet on the deck.

"Do that, ye Dutchman!" he shouted, as soon as he could get his breath.

*Edwin Tarrise*

### A FELLOW FEELING

*Spectator:* "Why do you suppose the judge let that fellow off? It was proven that he had been getting drunk and tearing things up generally."

*Court Attendant:* "The judge learned that the prisoner's wife was a suffragette."

"But what had that to do with it?"

"Well, you see, the judge's wife is one, too."

*Clifton B. Dowd*

### A MISTAKE

"You don't want to make any mistake about Philadelphia's being a slow town," said Dobbleigh. "No, sirree. I discounted a thirty-day note over there once, and, by Jingo, thirty days pass just as quickly over there as they do here!"

*H. D. G.*



Walnuts and Wine

# NABISCO

## Sugar Wafers



As an accompaniment to chocolate or tea, or an adjunct to the dessert of a formal dinner, NABISCO Sugar Wafers are equally appropriate. Keep a few tins of these most delightful confections on hand —then you are prepared for any dessert emergency.

***In ten cent tins***

Also in twenty-five cent tins

**NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY**

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

## Walnuts and Wine

### HE WONDERED

*By C. E. V. D.*

It was a little Lawyer Man,  
Who softly blushed as he began  
Her poor dead husband's will to scan.

He smiled while thinking of his fee,  
Then said to her, so tenderly:  
"You have a nice fat legacy."

And when, next day, he lay in bed,  
With bandages upon his head,  
He wondered what on earth he'd said.

### ENCOURAGING

"That's awful medicine mamma got me from the doctor," said Freddie, with a wry grimace, "but she gives me a penny for every spoonful I take. Just look in my savings-bank and see all the money I have."

"Gee!" exclaimed his little brother, eying the pile of coppers. "You have nearly enough to buy another bottle."

*J. J. O'Connell*

### PAT AND HIS BIKE

A gentleman who had purchased a new bicycle gave his old one to an Irishman.

"You'll find the wheel useful when you are in a hurry," said the gentleman to Pat.

"Oi trust it will be a long toime till Oi can ride it," said the Irishman.

"Why, have you ever tried?" asked the gentleman.

"Oi hov," was the gloomy reply. "A frind lint me his. Oi had it three or four weeks, practisin' day an' noight, an' niver got so Oi could balance mesilf shtandin' shtill, let alone roide it."

*H. E. Zimmerman*

### BETTER SUITED

"I teach my parrot only short words."

"Do you? I should think parrots better adapted to polysyllables."

*Clara O'Neill*

Walnuts and Wine

# BAKER'S CHOCOLATE

THE LEADER  
FOR FOUR GENERATIONS

1780-1910

IT  
MAKES THE CAKE  
AND  
TAKES THE PRIZES



**52 Highest Awards in Europe and America**



The genuine Baker's Chocolate is the pure product of carefully selected and scientifically blended cocoa beans from different parts of the tropical regions, to which nothing has been added and from which nothing has been taken. Unequaled for smoothness, delicacy and natural flavor.

A very attractive booklet of Choice Recipes, with many colored illustrations, telling you how to make a great variety of dainty dishes and delicious candies, will be sent free by

**WALTER BAKER & CO. LTD.**

Reg. U. S. Pat. Office.

Established 1780

**DORCHESTER, MASS.**

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

## Walnuts and Wine

### MISPLACED PITY

He was a real philanthropist, for he gave his brains as well as his money, and he did not advertise. Some years ago he was showing some acquaintances—millionaires like himself—over a school he had lately founded. It was the first manual training school in the country, and as the captains of industry went through carpentering classes and sewing-rooms and kitchen and forge, they were greatly impressed. Finally one of the visitors pointed to a boy in a science class.

"There, see that boy yonder in the second row next the window? A clean-cut youngster and as neat as any of them, but you can tell by the fact that his hair has n't been cut for three months what a struggle his folks must be having. I'd like to give that boy something, if you don't mind," he said, turning to the founder of the school, "so he can have his hair cut."

But that gentleman explained that he would look out for the boy, and afterwards the visitors learned that the boy who needed the hair-cut was the son of the founder of the school.

W. A.

### WHY HE LAUGHED

Miss Mattie belonged to the Old South, and she was entertaining a guest of distinction.

On the morning following his arrival she told Tillie, the little colored maid, to take a pitcher of fresh water to Mr. Firman's room, and to say that Miss Mattie sent him her compliments, and that if he wanted a bath, the bath-room was at his service.

When Tillie returned she said:

"I tol' him, Miss Mattie, en' he laughed fit to bus' hisself."

"Why did he laugh, Tillie?"

"I dunno."

"What did you tell him?"

"Jus' what you tol' me to."

"Tillie, tell me exactly what you said."

"I banged de doah, and I said, 'Mr. Firman, Miss Mattie sends you her lub, and she says, 'Now you can get up and wash yo'self''!"

L. M. S.

### MORAL BOTANY

*Jimmy:* "Say, Papa, what kind of grass is a grass-widow?"

*Papa:* "Wild oats, my son."

Brett Page

Walnuts and Wine



Mother, Give Your Child  
Have to open the other  
Package of

*Kellogg's*

## TOASTED CORN FLAKES

The Kind with the Flavor —  
Made of the Best White Corn

THE GENUINE ALWAYS HAS THIS SIGNATURE

*W. K. Kellogg*

KELLOGG TOASTED CORN FLAKE CO. Battle Creek, Mich.



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Canadian Trade supplied by the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Co., Ltd., London, Ont.

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## Walnuts and Wine

### THE ELOQUENT YOUNG SENATOR

Years ago, before Senator Beveridge was as conspicuous politically as he is now, he belonged to a literary club in Indianapolis, formed for the purpose of studying Shakespeare, and known as the Avon Club.

Early in the history of the club a heated discussion arose as to whether the life of Shakespeare should be studied together with his plays, or whether the club's work should deal solely with the plays. Part of the club—a prominent part—were for the life, but the minority, led by Beveridge, held out against them.

"Why," exclaimed the future Senator, in the midst of a burst of eloquence in defense of his stand—"why should we want to spend our time over the unimportant details of this man's life? Why trace the eagle to the barnyard whence he came?"

*Albert Rabb*

### HIS AWED LISTENERS

An English scientist was in the habit of taking hunting trips in the north of Scotland. Here, when night came upon them, and he and his guides were sitting around their camp, he would become very communicative on scientific marvels, even narrating to his seemingly awed listeners things that he never confided to his colleagues at home.

One night the distinguished Englishman paused in his talk, and, turning to one of his guides, asked curiously:

"Sandy, what is it that you and your companions keep taking out of your pockets and eating while I'm telling you these things?"

"Salt," replied Sandy calmly; "a grain at a time."

*Charles C. Mullin*

### A CONTINGENCY

*By L. C. Davis*

"The early bird will get the worm";  
Of that there is no question;  
But if that worm should chance to turn  
He'd get the indigestion.

### NO REWARD

"How long a term does the vice-president serve, pa?"

"Four years, my son."

"Does n't he get anything off for good behavior?"

*Neva Hudson*



Walnuts and Wine



## Dr. Jekyll *and* Mr. Hyde At the Telephone

Courteous and considerate co-operation is as essential at the telephone as in the office or home.

In every use of the telephone system, three human factors are brought into action—one at each end, one or both anxious and probably impatient, another at the central office, an expert, at least as intelligent and reliable as the best stenographers or bookkeepers.

For the time being, this central office factor is the personal servant of the other two and

is entitled to the same consideration that is naturally given to their regular employees.

Perfect service depends upon the perfect co-ordinate action of all three factors—any one failing, the service suffers. This should never be forgotten.

All attempts to entirely eliminate the personal factor at the central office, to make it a machine, have been unsuccessful. There are times when no mechanism, however ingenious, can take the place of human intelligence.

***The marvelous growth of the Bell System has made the use of the telephone universal and the misuse a matter of public concern. Discourtesy on the part of telephone users is only possible when they fail to realize the efficiency of the service. It will cease when they talk over the telephone as they would talk face to face.***

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY  
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

***One Policy,***

***One System,***

***Universal Service.***

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## Walnuts and Wine

### ASSORTED EPITAPHS

UP TO DATE AND BEYOND

*By Charles Irvin Junkin*

Here lies the body of Father Time,  
No more to fugit or soar or climb.  
He was put to death, the gay old hummer,  
By a plain Amalgamated Plumber.

Hic jacet Pinchot,  
Done to death,  
And buried deep—  
But hold your breath!  
It may be true,  
It 's half-suspected,  
We yet shall see  
Him resurrected.

Here lies the form of Howdie Taft,  
Cherubic fore, cherubic aft;  
St. Peter may not like the style,  
And yet surrender to the Smile.

Above this stone  
The raven croaks;  
Beneath it lie  
Some ancient Jokes;  
And by and by,  
Some wicked men  
Will dig them up,  
To sell again.



### THE STYLISH FISHERMAN

One of the guests at a fashionable summer resort in West Virginia got himself up in his best "fishing" togs and started out to try his luck along a certain mountain stream.

Meeting a native, he asked: "Here, my good man! Kindly tell me whether it would be worth my while to try fishing in this vicinity."

The native regarded him scornfully. "The fishin' ain't good," he finally said, "but I ain't informed as to how you values your time."

*Taylor Edwards*

## The Triumph of Ferruccio Busoni

(THE GREATEST LIVING PIANIST)

as shown by the enthusiastic criticism of the press and musical critics everywhere, could not have been accomplished without the aid of an instrument of the inimitable character of the

# Chickering.

piano

of which he writes as follows:

Messrs. Chickering & Sons.

Gentlemen:—Not because it would be a comprehensible impulse of politeness,—nor even because we are associated in one common artistic interest,—but merely through sincere sympathy and pure conviction, I feel bound to express to you my high appreciation and my deep gratitude as far as are concerned your great achievements and your most kind services with the

Chickering Pianos.

To realize an enjoyable piano-playing, these are the conditions:—to perform beautifully beautiful music on a beautiful instrument. The first I try to obtain; the second is provided by great masters, charming masters, respectful masters; the third undoubtedly you have produced into my hands.

There are piano-maker's art studios, and there are piano-maker's manufactories. Remain as you are, the artists in piano-making. It is the way to add your own chapter to the history of music.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours most faithfully,

*Ferruccio Busoni*

This is undoubtedly the greatest tribute ever paid a piano by a world-famed artist. It is an enthusiastic outpouring of that which is in his heart concerning the piano that enabled him to perfect his art. Hear the exquisite tone-quality and power of Chickering pianos at the stores of our representatives everywhere.

*Upon mentioning this magazine we will forward a 7 x 9 Mezzotint photograph of Ferruccio Busoni.*

Made Solely by CHICKERING & SONS  
731 Tremont Street, cor. Northampton      Established, 1823      Boston, Mass.

## Walnuts and Wine

### A GENUINE SURPRISE

"We have the surprise beautifully planned," said young Mrs. Westerleigh to the guests, "and Frank does n't suspect a thing. I think he has even forgotten that to-day's his birthday. He will get home from the office at about seven o'clock. Then he always goes upstairs to take off his coat and put on his smoking-jacket for the evening. When he is upstairs I will call out suddenly, 'Oh, Frank, come down quick! The gas is escaping.' Then he will rush down here, unsuspecting, to find the crowd of friends waiting for him."

It went off exactly as planned. Westerleigh came home at the regular hour and went directly upstairs. The guests held their breath while Mrs. Westerleigh called out excitedly, "Oh, Frank, come down quick. The gas is escaping in the parlor."

Every light had been turned out, and the parlor was in perfect darkness. There was a rapid rush of feet down the stairway, then a voice said, "I don't smell any gas."

"Better light the jet," Mrs. Westerly suggested tremulously.

There was a sputter, and suddenly the room was flooded with light. Everybody screamed. The hostess fainted.

For there in the centre of the room stood Westerleigh, attired only in a natty union suit, with a fresh pair of trousers over his arm.

Birthday parties still form a forbidden subject of conversation at the Westerleighs'.

*R. O. Eastman*

### MERCY!

*By Harold Susman*

Unto a Medium I went,  
Some message from the dead to hear;  
Although I told her my intent,  
She out of spirits did appear!

### TICKLISH

"How many ribs have you?" asked the teacher.

"I don't know, ma'am," giggled Sallie. "I'm so awfully ticklish, I could never count 'em."

*J. L. S.*

### TOO BAD

"I see the drug-store is advertising bargains in patent medicines to-day."

"Is that so? Well, that's too aggravating! There is n't anything the matter with any of us."

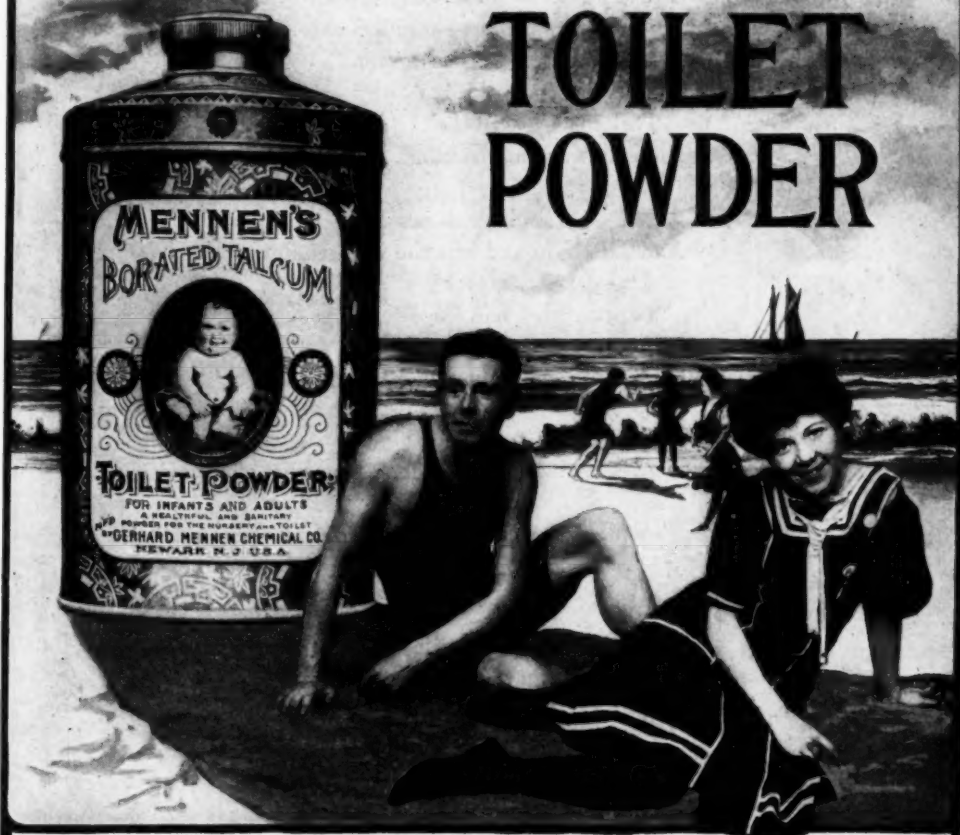
*Isaline Normand*

Walnuts and Wine

# MENNEN'S

BORATED TALCUM

## TOILET POWDER



**One Touch of Mennen's Soothes the Whole  
World's Skin**

Positive relief for Prickly Heat, Chafing and Sunburn; deodorizes perspiration. For over a quarter of a century it has been the standard toilet preparation. Remember to ask for Mennen's, and accept no substitute.

*Sample box for 2c stamp*

**GERHARD MENNEN CO.**

**Orange Street, Newark, N. J.**

*The Pioneer Makers of Talcum Powder*

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## Walnuts and Wine

### QUITE OFT

*By W. J. Lampton*

Quite oft I walk about the town—  
Indeed, I never ride;  
I have an innate pride,  
A kind of natural crown,  
Which makes me feel that I  
Must pass the luxury by  
Of riding at my ease while those  
My betters, possibly—who knows?—  
Must walk. And so I walk,  
And as I walk I think,  
Perhaps I even talk  
And say I'm on the blink,  
Or by the living Jar  
I'd own a big red car  
And ride in it and run the walkers down  
And say  
What right had they  
To clutter up My way!  
Quite oft I walk about the town.

### THE OBLIGING PROPRIETOR

"Won't you please give me an order?" pleaded the persistent drummer.

"Certainly," replied the crusty proprietor. "Get out!"

*Clifton B. Dowd*

### SUGGESTIVE

Mary (age six): "Uncle Charlie, I wish you many happy returns of your birthday, and mamma said that if you gave me a dollar, not to lose it."

*W. R. Jamieson, M.D.*

### A POULTRY FABLE

The hen returned to her nest, and found it empty.

"Very funny," said she; "I can never find things where I lay them."

*Isaline Normand*

### UNAPPRECIATED AMBITION

"My hair," remarked the middle-aged man sadly, "is the most ambitious thing about me, it seems."

"What's the answer?" queried his friend.

"It is always coming out on top," explained the first party.

*Joe King*



THERE can be no stronger proof of the worth of an article than the fact that it is widely imitated. Makers of paper have imitated the name and endeavored to imitate the quality of

# Old Hampshire Bond

It still remains the standard, correct in every particular. For business or men's social correspondence OLD HAMPSHIRE BOND meets every requirement of the most exacting man.

Let us send you the Old Hampshire Bond Book of Specimens. It contains suggestive specimens of letterheads and other business forms, printed, lithographed and engraved, on the white and fourteen colors of Old Hampshire Bond. Write for it on your present letterhead.

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SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, MASSACHUSETTS

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MADE "A LITTLE BETTER THAN SEEMS NECESSARY"—"LOOK FOR THE WATERMARK"



Donovan of Detroit

Chance of Chicago

**T**he men who uphold the standards of American sport today are clean men—clean of action and clean of face. Your baseball star takes thought of his personal appearance—it's a part of his team ethics. He starts the day with a clean shave—and, like all self-reliant men, he shaves himself.

Wagner, Jennings, Kling, Donovan, Chance—each of the headliners owns a Gillette Safety Razor *and uses it*. The Gillette is typical of the American spirit. It is used by capitalists, professional men, business men—by men of action all over this country—*three million of them*.

**GILLETTE SALES COMPANY, 50 W. Second Street, Boston**  
New York, Times Building   Chicago, Stock Exchange Building   Gillette Safety Razor, Ltd., London  
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Kling of Chicago

Wagner of Pittsburg

Jennings of Detroit

Its use starts habits of energy—of initiative. And men who *do* for themselves are men who *think* for themselves.

Be master of your own time. Buy a Gillette and use it.

You can shave with it the first time you try. The only perfectly *safe* razor and the only safety razor that shaves on the correct hollow ground shaving principle.

No stropping, no honing.

Send your name on a post-card for our new baseball book—schedule of all league games—batting records—24 pages of interesting facts and figures. Every fan should have it. It is free.

*King C. Gillette*

GILLETTE SALES COMPANY, 50 W. Second Street, Boston

Factories: Boston, Montreal, Leicester, Berlin, Paris

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## Walnuts and Wine

### GEOGRAPHICAL ACCURACY

After listening to a rambling account of an operation for appendicitis, an old physician remarked at length, "Madam, I don't believe you know where your appendix is."

"Yes, I do," was the triumphant answer; "it's in a bottle at Berkeley."

*Mary Starbuck*

### TIT FOR TAT

A Long Island man was holding forth with respect to the "borrowing habit" so common in suburban communities, when he was reminded of the following instances:

A writer of miscellaneous matter, being just then engaged on an article on pessimistic literature, learned that one authority he wished to consult—Eduard von Hartmann—was to be found in the library of a lawyer of the place. Accordingly, the writer repaired to the lawyer's house and asked the loan of the volume.

"You are entirely welcome to it," said the owner, "but you must n't take it from my library. I'm sorry, but I've lost so many books through lending them that a year ago I registered a solemn vow never to let another volume leave my house."

The writer thanked the lawyer, but of course he did not avail himself of the privilege extended him.

Some time later the lawyer came to the writer and asked to borrow his lawn-mower.

"I am delighted to lend you my lawn-mower," said the writer, "though it is my rule never to permit it to leave my lawn. There, however, you may use it to your heart's content."

*Fenimore Martin*

### THE MODERN SPELLER

When little Katharine came home from school, her aunt asked her what she had learned that day.

"I learned to spell walnut," was the proud reply. "H-i-c-k, wal; o-r-y, nut: walnut!"

*Helen Talbot Porter*

### A SMALL BOY'S IDEA OF PARADISE

*By Margaret G. Hays*

When I go up to Heaven  
An' join the Angel Bands,  
Gee! hope 'at no one there  
'll say, "Go wash those hands."

Some women are lemons in a peach skin.

*J. B. Carhart*

# Lest We Forget!

**M**EEETING an officer of the **Hartford Fire Insurance Company**, a prominent business man said, "Your advertisements are excellent. A man *ought* to know about the company in which he is insured." The officer replied, "Do you know about yours?" "No," said the business man, "not yet. I always mean to when I read your advertisements, but other things come up and I forget. Why don't you put a coupon at the bottom of the advertisement which I can fill in while I am in the notion, and send to my agent to insure me in the **Hartford**, and that will settle the matter?" "Excellent idea," said the officer of the **Hartford**.

And here it is for him and for you. Use it. The **Hartford**, now a century old, is the best known Fire Insurance Company in America. Any agent or broker will get you a policy in the **Hartford** if you tell him to do so.



## STATEMENT JANUARY 1, 1910

Capital,	\$2,000,000.00
Liabilities,	14,321,953.11
Assets,	23,035,700.61
Surplus for Policy Holders,	8,713,747.50

....., 1910.

(Name of Agent or Broker.)

(Address.)

When my fire insurance expires, please see that I get a policy in the **HARTFORD**.

Name .....

Address .....

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention **LIPPINCOTT'S**.

## Walnuts and Wine

### FIRST AND LAST

*By Stuart W. Knight*

"Not guilty," the prisoner said,  
But he spoke as though telling a fiction.  
"Thirty days," said the judge with a frown,  
And he spoke with an air of conviction.

#### PUZZLED TOMMY

"Pa," said Tommy, "my Sunday-school teacher says if I'm good I'll go to heaven.

"Well, what about it?" said his pa.

"Well, you said if I was good I'd go to the circus. Now, I want to know who's fibbing, you or her."

*Joe King*

#### GOT HIS RECEIPT

He had run up a small bill at the village store, and went to pay it, first asking for a receipt.

The proprietor grumbled and complained it was too small to give a receipt for. It would do just as well, he said, to cross the account off, and so drew a diagonal pencil line across the book.

"Does that settle it?" asked the customer.

"Sure."

"An' ye'll niver be askin' for it agin?"

"Certainly not."

"Faith, thin," said the other coolly, "an' I'll kape me money in me pocket."

"But I can rub that out," said the store-keeper.

"I thought so," said the customer dryly. "Maybe ye'll be givin' me a receipt now. Here's yer money."

*William C. Bennett*

#### WHERE SHE FOUND COMFORT

At a prayer-meeting held in the backwoods of Rhode Island, testimonies were requested, and a very old woman tottered to her feet.

"I want ter tell this blessed company," her voice quavered, "that I have rheumatiz in my back, and rheumatiz in my shoulders, and rheumatiz in my legs, and rheumatiz in my arms, but I hev ben upheld and comforted by the beautiful Bible verse, 'Grin and bear it.'"

*Helen Talbot Porter*

The wolf is a good judge of doors.

*Ellis O. Jones*



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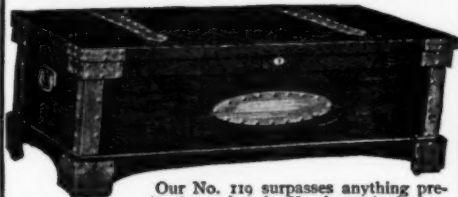
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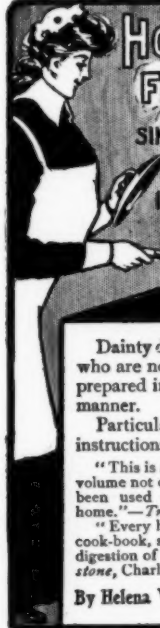
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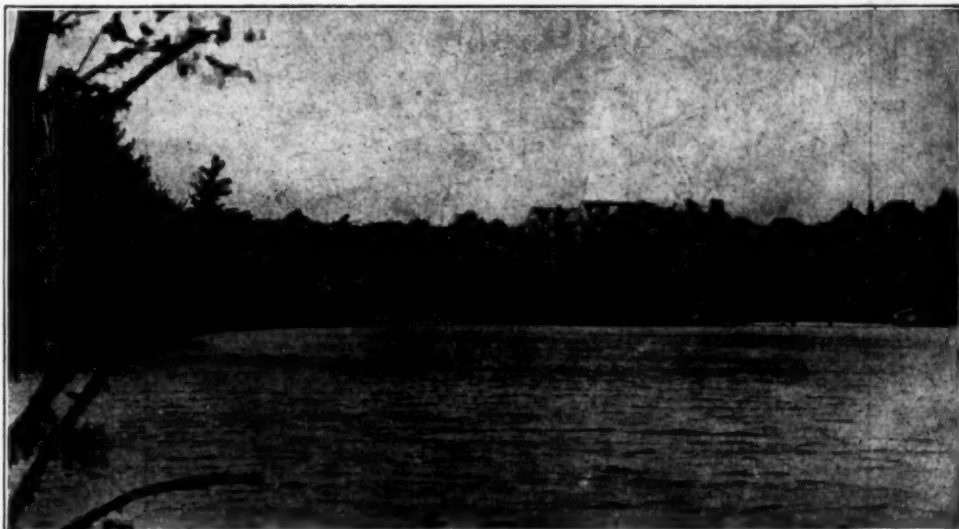
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